Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

2027 Riparian Habitat Protection In the kettle and Snake River Watersheds
Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/19/2026

Project Title: 2027 Riparian Habitat Protection In the kettle and Snake River Watersheds

Funds Recommended: $1,208,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Paul Swanson
Title: District Manager
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Partners Contact

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Pine SWCD: Paul Swanson - paul.swanson@pinecountymn.gov - 320-216-4241

Location Information

County Location(s):

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Northern Forest

Activity types:

Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Wetlands

Forest

Narrative

Abstract

We will utilize BWSR RIM conservation easements to protect approximately 300 acres of high-quality private forests, wetlands, and shoreline in the Northern Forest Ecological Section. Sites will be selected utilizing minor watershed/RAQ scoring and an integrative ranking process developed through a collaborative process. By using this methodology, not only will we be stacking public benefits but also maximizing conservation benefits per dollar (return on investment). Development trends pose a serious threat to Lake Sturgeon, four-toed and spotted salamanders, Gilt Darter, Northern Long-eared Bat, Blanding's Turtles, and over 128 unique, rare, endangered, and threaten species that live in these watersheds.

Design and Scope of Work

Watersheds in northern Minnesota benefit from public lands since they are mostly forested. The primary risk to habitat and water quality is on private lands. Private forestlands are key because they are more likely to be developed resulting in habitat fragmentation, loss of connectivity, increased pollution and stormwater runoff, and siltation or sedimentation of water bodies. Conversion of private forestlands to more intense land uses place negative impacts on both wildlife habitat and water quality. Both the Kettle and Snake river watersheds have experienced an increase in development and land use conversion in recent years. Since most of the prime lakeshore in the counties is developed, present and future development of river shoreland is expected.

The DNR Hinckley Area Fisheries Office has been tagging and monitoring Lake Sturgeon in the Kettle, St. Croix, and Snake rivers since the early 1990's. Populations appear to be stable and small sturgeon are recruiting into the fishery. While Lake Sturgeon populations appear to be healthy in the Kettle and Snake Rivers, their future relies on clean water. Healthy forests, wetlands, and shorelines in watersheds are vital to the water quality downstream. Thus, protecting private riparian forestland is critical to fish and wildlife habitat.

In 2016, the MN DNR and BWSR, working with SWCDs and partners developed a protection framework based on research developed by MN DNR Fisheries. The MN DNR identified a strong correlation between water quality and habitat that sustains fish populations and maintaining 75 percent forest cover in the watershed. The process works as follows: 1) Prioritize minor watersheds that have less than 75% protected watersheds, 2) Target specific parcels using RAQ scores and 3) over time, measure progress toward 75% forestland protection goal on watershed basis. We periodically measure the percent of the watersheds with permanent forest protection to illustrate this transformation on graphic dial like a speedometer. As of early 2026, the Kettle Watershed is 57.06% protected, and the Snake Watershed is 48.84% protected.

To move the needle in Kettle and Snake watersheds, this program will utilize BWSR's Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) conservation easements. To maximize conservation return on investment the SWCDs will select parcels with the greatest conservation value. To accomplish this, we will use the RAQ methodology scoring system (Riparian, Adjacent, Quality). Each private forested parcel is scored on a 0-10 scale based on the parcel proximity to water ("Riparian") or protected lands ("Adjacency") and various local defined features ("Quality"), such as wild rice, trout, and biodiversity. In short, the RAQ tool prioritizes parcels with benefits overlapping – habitat, biodiversity, cost, water quality, and resiliency to create and protect extensive habitat complexes. Therefore, using the minor

watershed/RAQ methodology we are stacking public benefits and maximizing the conservation benefits per dollar. We will protect approximately 300 acres of high-quality private forests, wetlands, and shoreline habitat important for Lake Sturgeon and another 128 Species in Greatest Conservation Need that are known to occur within these watersheds.

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

Most of the project area falls within the Mille Lacs Uplands Subsections. 128 Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) are known or predicted to occur within the Mille Lacs Uplands, the third most of all subsections in Minnesota. According to the species problem analysis in the Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare: An Action Plan for Minnesota Wildlife, habitat loss and degradation is the most significant challenge facing SGCN populations in this subsection. This project seeks to address this challenge by protecting the healthy riparian lands from the threat of development, habitat loss or degradation through the use of RIM conservation easements.

The project area has a mixed representation of extensive forest lands and riparian habitats that are home to many Species of Greatest Conservation Need including: Lake Sturgeon, Blanding's turtle, wood turtles, gray wolves, bald eagles, ospreys, sandhill cranes, trumpeter swans, and yellow rails. The St. Croix River Basin is also globally-recognized for its mussel diversity, over 40 known mussels occur within the St. Croix River Basin, including 5 federally endangered, and 20 state-listed species such as rare mussels like the winged mapleleaf, spike, and round pigtoe.

The Kettle and Snake Rivers are also home to populations of Lake Sturgeon (Acipenser fulvescens). These bony-plated, ancient-looking fish prefer moderately clear, large rivers and lakes, where they can migrate long distances to spawning areas and foraging for the invertebrates and small fish that make up their diet. Their large sizes and fighting qualities make them a favorite among catch and release anglers. Sturgeon are long-lived, slow growing, and can take many years to mature and be able to reproduce. They are vulnerable to degraded water quality and over exploitation, as well as to dams which block fish passage. Therefore, protecting high-quality private forests, wetlands, and shoreline is critical to maintain fish and wildlife habitat.

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

Because of its proximity to the Twin Cities and its vast network of roads, this area is under increasing pressure from human activities, including the expansion of residential development, some of it affecting river shoreline. While Lake Sturgeon populations appear to be healthy in the Kettle and Snake Rivers, their future relies on clean water. Healthy forests, wetlands, and shorelines in watersheds are vital to the water quality. If we do nothing this type of development along the rivers will continue. Increases in housing density and associated development on rural forest lands can be linked to numerous changes to private forest services across watersheds, including decreases in native wildlife; changes in forest health; and reduced water quality, forest carbon storage, timber production, and recreational benefits. Protecting healthy watersheds with conservation easements now is a cost-effective strategy to ensure that the ecosystem and economic services provided by healthy watersheds remain intact.

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

This project will utilize the Landscape Stewardship Plans minor watershed science-based targeting to expand important habitat corridors and complexes on private lands. The RAQ tool scores each private forested parcel on a 0-3 scale for each of common characteristics; "Riparian"--the parcels proximity to water, "Adjacency"--the parcels

location in relation to contiguous tracts of existing state, county, or federal land in preference to parcels scattered across the landscape, knowing that a forest community is healthier and more diverse with less fragmentation, and "Quality"-- is the locally determined value of the land (1-3 Points), which can include a number of criteria, such as biodiversity from the MN County Biological Survey, trout/cisco, wild rice, old growth forests, rare species, and groundwater recharge and sensitive areas.

The RAQ tool has been developed for the entire Kettle River Watershed and includes a series of RAQ maps for each major HUC-10 subwatershed. The RAQ tool will be a helpful tool to target areas where public investments will have the most benefit. This scoring was updated in 2022 with a new Landscape Stewardship Plan for the Kettle and Upper St. Croix watersheds. RAQ was developed for the Snake River Watershed with the first round of funding for this program. This data targets RIM easements to the parcel level and this allows us to hand select the best parcels for habitat value and prevent future fragmentation in the entire watershed. The following additional factors are considered to ensure site selection reflects current science-based measures for riparian habitat protection: feet of shoreline protected, development potential of site, depth from shore, watershed considerations, and easement size relative to the parcel. This played an integral part in outreach, interested and successful enrollment the first and second round of funding. This 2-step methodology is proven through Environmental Natural Resource Trust Fund and Clean Water Fund RIM easement programs. The BWSR RIM is one of the most efficient and effective easement programs in Minnesota.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Minnesota Forest Resource Council Landscape Plans

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Northern Forest

Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation This project will measure the number acres of forestland and wetland habitat enrolled into RIM easements. We also will measure the number of miles of shoreline protected and the individual minor watershed percent protection goal.*

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

This funding request is not supplanting existing funding or a substitution for any previous funding.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement of RIM easements. BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry out oversight, monitoring and inspection of conservation easements. Easements are inspected every year for the first five years beginning the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed

every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs document findings and report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations are identified.

Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are $10,000 per easement. This value is based on using SWCD staff for monitoring and preliminary enforcement. The amount includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time as well as costs for encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations and legal enforcement.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2027-Ongoing	Landowner responsibility	Maintain compliance with easement terms.	-	-
2027-Ongoing	Stewardship Account	Inspections every year for the first five years; then every third year.	Corrective actions to address violations.	Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General's office.

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

Lake sturgeon have long held importance in Native American cultures, including the bands of Ojibwe who call this area of Minnesota, home. Lake sturgeon are also a favored catch-and-release fish species in some circles of anglers. By protecting habitat that protects sturgeon populations, we are able to provide opportunities for many Minnesota communities to continue practice of their culture and recreational opportunities.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Who will manage the easement?
The State of Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) will be the responsible party for monitoring and enforcing easements with assistance from the appropriate SWCD for monitoring.

Who will be the easement holder?
The State of Minnesota through the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
5; the actual number will depend on the cost of easements.

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
No

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Will the eased land be open for public use?
Yes

Describe the expected public use:
RIM easements do not require that private land is open to the public; however, this question is also evaluated on public benefit and RIM easements do provide a significant public benefit; often expand wildlife habitat near public lands; and do not limit the potential for the land to be open to the public through other programs.

RIM's statutory language requires restriction of building and agricultural activities on an easement. If RIM also required public access, the landowner would be retaining almost no private rights to the land and still paying property taxes. RIM easement land is still in private ownership and the landowner still pays property taxes and is still consistent with the statutory goals of the Outdoor Heritage Fund of protection and restoration of habitat. Minnesota Statute 97A.056 states ". . .the fund must be expended to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife." and "The council shall make recommendations . . . that directly relate to the restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, and that prevent forest fragmentation, encourage forest consolidation, and expand restored native prairie."

Criteria in RIM program scoresheets used to evaluate and prioritize parcels funded include proximity of the easement land to lands that are in public ownership and/or open to public hunting. Parcels immediately adjacent to public land or that would connect or expand larger existing habitat areas receive additional points in the scoring and ranking process than a parcel that does not provide that benefit. Wildlife do not follow property lines; therefore protected private lands adjacent to and near public lands create complexes of public and private land that provide high quality habitat supporting wildlife, including recreationally hunted species, allowing them to thrive on and off public lands. Protected private lands also add visual and noise buffers that allow users of public land to better enjoy their experiences.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?
Yes

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:
Though uncommon, new trails may be developed if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (fire breaks, berm maintenance, forest stewardship) and are noted on the conservation plan. Narrow mowed trails for personal use are allowed for landowner access on RIM easements. Unauthorized trails are a violation of the easement.

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?
Under the terms of the easement, a conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement and the conservation plan. BWSR, in cooperation with SWCDs, implements a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms and the conservation plan.

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?
Yes

Vegetative restoration will occur when necessary and these restoration costs are included in the Easement Acquisition line of the budget table.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?
Yes

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
RIM easements secured on 300 acres	June 30, 2031
Final Report Submitted	October 1, 2031

Date of Final Report Submission: 10/01/2031

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$96,700	-	-	$96,700
Contracts	$12,500	-	-	$12,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$1,021,800	-	-	$1,021,800
Easement Stewardship	$50,000	-	-	$50,000
Travel	$2,100	-	-	$2,100
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$21,000	-	-	$21,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$3,000	-	-	$3,000
Supplies/Materials	$900	-	-	$900
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$1,208,000**	**-**	**-**	**$1,208,000**

Partner: BWSR

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$81,600	-	-	$81,600
Contracts	$12,500	-	-	$12,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$1,021,800	-	-	$1,021,800
Easement Stewardship	$50,000	-	-	$50,000
Travel	$2,100	-	-	$2,100
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$21,000	-	-	$21,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$3,000	-	-	$3,000
Supplies/Materials	$900	-	-	$900
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$1,192,900**	**-**	**-**	**$1,192,900**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Management	0.15	4.0	$81,600	-	-	$81,600

Partner: Pine SWCD

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$15,100	-	-	$15,100
Contracts	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$15,100**	**-**	**-**	**$15,100**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Program Administration	0.03	4.0	$15,100	-	-	$15,100

Amount of Request: $1,208,000
Amount of Leverage: -
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%
DSS + Personnel: $117,700
As a % of the total request: 9.74%
Easement Stewardship: $50,000
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 4.89%

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
A reduction in funding reduced outputs (acres/activities) almost proportionately.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?

A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
The contracts line is used for payments to SWCD staff for easement acquisition and technical assistance, as appropriate. Estimated restoration costs are included in the easement acquisition line.

Easement Stewardship

What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?
5 easements at $10,000 per easement. The total stewardship amount will ultimately be dependent on the cost of easements and if the proposed easement number is reached. Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are $10,000 per easement. This value is based on using SWCD staff for monitoring and preliminary enforcement. The amount includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time as well as costs for encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations and legal enforcement.

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
No

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging
The travel line will only be used for traditional travel costs.

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?
BWSR annually reviews and updates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done and the program staff time involved.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?
Steel posts and signs to mark easement boundaries.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?
No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	48	-	252	-	300
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**48**	**-**	**252**	**-**	**300**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$193,300	-	$1,014,700	-	$1,208,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$193,300**	**-**	**$1,014,700**	**-**	**$1,208,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	300	300
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**300**	**300**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	$1,208,000	$1,208,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$1,208,000**	**$1,208,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$4,027	-	$4,026	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	$4,026
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

2.8 miles

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
Yes - Sign up criteria is attached

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
The SWCDs will mail letters to eligible landowners utilizing RAQ scoring. Once the SWCD has an interested landowner the easement will be ranked using the integrative ranking process.The Kettle and Snake RIM Easement ranking sheet is attached as an example of the scoring sheet that will be used to rank RIM Easements. The SWCD then brings the parcel to the project technical committee for comments and recommendations. This committee reviews easement proposals and sorts through them for the parcels that provide the greatest public benefit possible. We always look for areas with high quality habitat, where a limited public investment can leverage a larger area of public benefit. The result is an increase in resiliency to the habitat base. The parcels that rank the highest tend to be adjacent to public lands, in a river corridor, or both.

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

2027 Riparian Habitat Protection In the kettle and Snake River Watersheds

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - 2027 Riparian Habitat Protection In the kettle and Snake River Watersheds
Organization: Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District
Manager: Paul Swanson

Budget

Requested Amount: $4,000,000
Appropriated Amount: $1,208,000
Percentage: 30.2%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$327,500	-	$96,700	-	29.53%	-
Contracts	$42,500	-	$12,500	-	29.41%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$3,370,100	-	$1,021,800	-	30.32%	-
Easement Stewardship	$170,000	-	$50,000	-	29.41%	-
Travel	$6,900	-	$2,100	-	30.43%	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$70,100	-	$21,000	-	29.96%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$9,900	-	$3,000	-	30.3%	-
Supplies/Materials	$3,000	-	$900	-	30.0%	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$4,000,000**	**-**	**$1,208,000**	**-**	**30.2%**	**-**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 30% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	1,020	300	29.41%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$4,000,000	$1,208,000	30.2%
Enhance	-	-	-

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	1,020	300	29.41%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$4,000,000	$1,208,000	30.2%
Enhance	-	-	-

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

2027 St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Phase 8

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/16/2026

Project Title: 2027 St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Phase 8

Funds Recommended: $4,388,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Kristin McElligott
Title: Natural Resources Manager
Organization: Wild Rivers Conservancy
Address: 1015 N Cascade St
City: Osceola, WI 54020
Email: kmcelligott@wildriversconservancy.org
Office Number: 7154833300 ex 25
Mobile Number: 4146406390
Fax Number:
Website: https://wildriversconservancy.org/

Partners Contact

Trust For Public Lands (TPL): *No Contact Added*

Wild Rivers Conservancy: *No Contact Added*

Location Information

County Location(s): Chisago, Kanabec, Washington and Pine.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Northern Forest

Metro / Urban

Activity types:

Protect in Fee

Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Forest

Habitat

Wetlands

Prairie

Narrative

Abstract

Under this phase of the program, Wild Rivers Conservancy of the St. Croix & Namekagon and Trust for Public Land will work in partnership to permanently protect approximately 376 acres of critical wildlife habitat through fee-title acquisition and restore 40 acres of degraded habitat on the Minnesota side of the St. Croix River watershed. The goals of the program are to protect high-quality wildlife habitat, improve conservation connectivity, and provide public access for outdoor recreation opportunities.

Design and Scope of Work

The St. Croix River watershed spans 7,760 square miles between Minnesota and Wisconsin with the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway flowing through its heart. The St. Croix River was the first designated Wild and Scenic Riverway in 1968. The landscape of the watershed contains large swaths of unique ecosystems, wildlife habitat and is home to 195 rare, threatened and endangered species. The Riverway is a regional attraction for upwards of one million visitors annually due to its many recreation opportunities including high-quality fishing, hunting, birding, hiking, and boating. Although the status of the St. Croix as a Wild and Scenic River comes with federal protections, those protections only apply to a thin ribbon of land adjacent to the Riverway. Beyond the Riverway boundary, more than 75% of the watershed's forest habitat remains unprotected, and the threat of development, fragmentation and conversion to agriculture is substantial.

The partnership, consisting of the Wild Rivers Conservancy (Conservancy), the Minnesota Land Trust (MLT), and Trust for Public Land (TPL), is working to increase the amount of land permanently protected on the Minnesota side of the St. Croix River watershed. The goals of the partnership are to protect large intact forests, sustain riparian forests, and restore and protect lands that are important to the 195 endangered, threatened and special concern species documented within the project area (Source: MN DNR Rare Species Guide).

Prior to the program's establishment, landowners had few, if any, options for permanent land protection. The program has proven how eager landowners are for permanent protection options throughout the watershed. Strategic landowner outreach has led to a queue of interested landowners wanting to protect their land for generations to come. To date, the St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration program partnership has protected 6,328 acres. 3,613 acres through conservation easements, 2,715 acres through fee-title acquisition, resulting in 38.5 miles of shoreline protected.

The partnership is requesting funding for Phase 8 of the program to continue the important work of permanently protecting some of Minnesota's highest-quality habitat. Under this proposal, both WRC and TPL are seeking funds; MLT has sufficient existing funds from previous phases for conservation easement and restoration activities. Funding for Phase 8 of the St. Croix Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration program will support the following activities:

TPL will protect approximately 376 acres of high-quality habitat through fee-title acquisition and restore 40 acres of degraded habitat on public lands. TPL will convey acquired lands to the DNR, except when LGU ownership is appropriate, for permanent ownership, management, and stewardship.

The Conservancy will provide overall program administration, project management, landowner outreach, and community engagement.

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

Permanently protecting high priority habitat within the St. Croix River watershed is a cost-effective strategy to conserve fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species. Areas targeted by this proposal have been identified and prioritized through state, regional, and local natural resource plans due to their high biodiversity, connectivity, and ability to preserve habitat for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). The project area has a mixed representation of extensive forestland, brushland, prairie, oak savanna, wetlands, and riparian habitats. These habitats are home to 195 documented endangered, threatened and special concern species including: lake sturgeon, wood turtle, Blanding's turtle, gray wolf, bald eagle, osprey, sandhill crane, trumpeter swan, yellow rail, and sharp-tailed grouse. The St. Croix River watershed is also globally recognized for its mussel diversity with 41 documented native unionid mussel species, including 5 listed as Federally endangered, and 23 state-listed species. The project area also contains a significant amount of high-quality brushland and regenerating forestland habitat critical to the breeding success of the golden-winged warbler.

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

The St. Croix watershed faces increasing development pressure from population growth. From 2020-2024, Minnesota counties within the St. Croix watershed experienced an average population increase of 4.3%, nearly triple the state average of 1.5% (Source: United States Census Bureau). Four of the top ten fastest-growing Minnesota counties from 2022-2023 lie within the project area. Five of the seven parcels for protection under this proposal fall within these counties. Based on current projections, these population growth trends are expected to accelerate. Increases in housing density and associated development on rural forest lands are linked to reductions in private forest services across watersheds, including reductions in native wildlife, forest health, water quality, carbon storage, timber production, and recreational benefits. Opportunities to protect these lands drastically diminish with the passage of time and change in ownership. Timing is critical while willing sellers of priority parcels are still in place.

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

This proposal uses a science-based multiple benefits approach for prioritizing and targeting areas of greatest conservation value. We use The Nature Conservancy's St. Croix Basin GIS-based Priority Protection Analysis which incorporates Minnesota Biological Survey Sites of Biodiversity Significance, Lakes of Biological Significance, habitat complexes and connectivity, along with other data sets to spatially prioritize the most important sites for protection. The intent of this model was to develop and score priorities where multiple benefits overlap – habitat,

biodiversity, water quality, water quantity, and resiliency. Evaluation criteria include: 1) aquatic and terrestrial habitat protection priorities, 2) lands important to drinking water quality and groundwater recharge, and 3) resilience of lands and waters to climate change and other anticipated future changes and disturbance.

More specifically, this approach includes data on habitat quality, target species and natural communities, and habitat complexes for terrestrial species with emphasis on expanding corridors adjacent to public lands. The most heavily weighted component of this approach uses data from the Minnesota Biological Survey focused on fish and wildlife that includes data on biodiversity, wetlands, native plant communities, Lakes of Biological Significance, wild rice catchments, cold water refuge for trout, proximity to protected lands, and ecological connections. Added benefits for water quality are assessed using data on wellhead protected areas, groundwater contamination susceptibility, private well density, and groundwater recharge.

Using results of this multiple benefits approach, areas will be targeted down to the parcel level for landowner engagement and outreach for implementing permanent protection activities.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Metro / Urban

Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

Northern Forest

Provide access to manage habitat on landlocked public properties or protect forest land from parcelization and fragmentation through fee acquisition, conservation or access easement

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *This project will be measured by the acres of wildlife corridors protected and evaluated based on the observed use by wildlife populations and evidence of SGCN.*

Programs in the northern forest region:

Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *This project will be measured by the acres of high quality forestlands that are permanently protected from development and fragmentation. Protected land will also be evaluated by its proximity to existing public lands as well as connectivity to other protected forestlands.*

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

Funding requested by the Partnership will not supplant or substitute for any previous non-legacy funding used for the same purpose.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

TPL will convey all fee-title land to the DNR or LGUs for permanent stewardship. Once land has been conveyed, initial site development and restoration of these lands will begin. Estimated costs for initial restoration work are included in this proposal. TPL will work with DNR or LGUs to complete a restoration and management plan, and implementation of that plan will be completed in the following years. These properties will be managed and maintained by the respective government entities according to OHF standards.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2030-2031	TPL - DNR	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation	-	-
2029	TPL - DNR	Develop restoration/management plan for property	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation	-
2028	TPL - OHF and DNR	Post property	Develop restoration/management plan for property	-

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

All organizations under this program's partnership hold a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values. Examples of that commitment include, but are not limited to: The Conservancy's ongoing partnership with BIPOC communities to improve access to public resources through outdoor experiences; TPL's work with diverse communities to put a park, trail, or natural area within a 10-minute walk of every Minnesotan living within a city; TPL's mentored hunt and angling program, which in partnership with the MN Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is facilitating hunting and angling opportunities for diverse communities on public lands and waters with a focus on lands protected with Outdoor Heritage funds.

This program provides significant benefits for all Minnesotans, including BIPOC and diverse communities, when land is protected and otherwise restored (e.g., clean air and water, abatement of climate change, and other ecosystem services). Beyond that, public land provides an opportunity for all people, but particularly for those who do not have access or resources to connect with private natural lands, to directly connect with the outdoors through hunting, fishing, hiking, or other outdoor recreational pursuits.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**
No

Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:
We will follow the County/Township Board notification processes as directed by the current statutory language.

Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?
Yes

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 or on lands to be acquired in this program?
Yes

Where does the activity take place?

WMA

State Forests

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
No

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?
No

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion?
Yes

Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:
N/A

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

State of MN

County

Local Unit of Government

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

WMA

AMA

SNA

State Forest

County Forest

What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
We anticipate 2-4 closed acquisitions.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?
No

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?
Yes

Estimated costs for initial restoration of lands protected through in-fee acquisition are included in this proposal. TPL will convey all fee-title land to the DNR or LGUs for permanent stewardship. Once land has been conveyed, initial site development and restoration of these lands will begin. TPL will work with DNR or LGUs to complete a restoration and management plan to help ensure that the land will be managed for its wildlife and water quality benefits. Implementation of that plan will be completed over the following 2-3 years. Long-term maintenance and management of these lands will fall to the respective government entities according to OHF standards.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?
Yes

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
TPL - Land acquired	June 30, 2031
TPL - Initial site development/restoration	Fall 2033
TPL - Landowner negotiations, agreements, and due diligence	June 30, 2031

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/01/2031

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$309,000	-	-	$309,000
Contracts	$141,000	-	-	$141,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$3,670,000	-	-	$3,670,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$2,000	$3,000	Private	$5,000
Professional Services	$45,000	-	-	$45,000
Direct Support Services	$48,000	$48,000	Private	$96,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$105,000	-	-	$105,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$3,000	-	-	$3,000
DNR IDP	$65,000	-	-	$65,000
Grand Total	**$4,388,000**	**$51,000**	**-**	**$4,439,000**

Partner: Trust For Public Lands (TPL)

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$214,000	-	-	$214,000
Contracts	$125,000	-	-	$125,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$3,670,000	-	-	$3,670,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	$3,000	Private	$3,000
Professional Services	$45,000	-	-	$45,000
Direct Support Services	$48,000	$48,000	Private	$96,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$105,000	-	-	$105,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	$65,000	-	-	$65,000
Grand Total	**$4,272,000**	**$51,000**	**-**	**$4,323,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Protection and Legal Staff	0.29	4.0	$214,000	-	-	$214,000

Partner: Wild Rivers Conservancy

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$95,000	-	-	$95,000
Contracts	$16,000	-	-	$16,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$2,000	-	-	$2,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$3,000	-	-	$3,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$116,000**	**-**	**-**	**$116,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Conservancy Staff	0.5	3.0	$95,000	-	-	$95,000

Amount of Request: $4,388,000
Amount of Leverage: $51,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 1.16%
DSS + Personnel: $357,000
As a % of the total request: 8.14%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
The Conservancy will receive 100% of the original requested amount for grant administration, support and outreach. TPL will receive the remaining appropriation (39% of our proposal) and will reduce our outcomes and project outputs proportionally.

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:
One half of TPL's DSS costs and all of TPL's travel costs are provided as privately sourced.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Since some costs are fixed, a somewhat greater than proportionate reduction in activities and acres would occur.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Program management costs (personnel and DSS expenses) will be reduced as well; however, these reductions will be less than proportional, since program development and grant management costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount. These are gross estimates of personnel time.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
TPL - Potential site clean-up and initial restoration activities. WRC - Outreach efforts in watershed counties. Web and social media content production including videography.

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

Appraisals

Design/Engineering

Other : Environmental Assessments; Mineral Assessments; Mapping

Surveys

Fee Acquisition

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?
TPL expects to close 2-4 acquisitions through this appropriations.

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
Yes

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?

TPL: DSS request is based upon our federal rate which has been approved by the DNR. 50% of these costs are requested from the grant, 50% is contributed as leverage.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?

No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	40	40
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	188	188	376
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**188**	**228**	**416**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	$80,000	$80,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	$2,212,000	$2,096,000	$4,308,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**$2,212,000**	**$2,176,000**	**$4,388,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	0	-	-	-	40	40
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	188	-	-	-	188	376
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**188**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**228**	**416**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	$80,000	$80,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$3,043,000	-	-	-	$1,265,000	$4,308,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$3,043,000**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$1,345,000**	**$4,388,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	$2,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	$11,765	$11,148
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	$2,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$16,186	-	-	-	$6,728
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

1

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
No

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
Trust for Public Land works with its public partners to identify and prioritize projects that meet their objectives and are on their priority lists. Criteria includes whether the land provides critical habitat for game and non-game species, quality public recreational opportunities, presence of unique plants and animal species (including SGCN), goals of conservation plans, adjacency to other public land or habitat complexes, existence of local support, immediacy of threats, landowner willingness and time frame.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
Janet Johnson WMA Addition	Chisago	03521134	8	$20,000	Yes	Restore cultivated land to native prairie habitat & oak savanna
Dalbo WMA Addition	Kanabec	03825233	52	$120,000	Yes	Restore cultivated land to native prairie habitat
Kroschel WMA Addition I	Kanabec	04122205	40	$60,000	Yes	Restore cultivated land to native prairie habitat

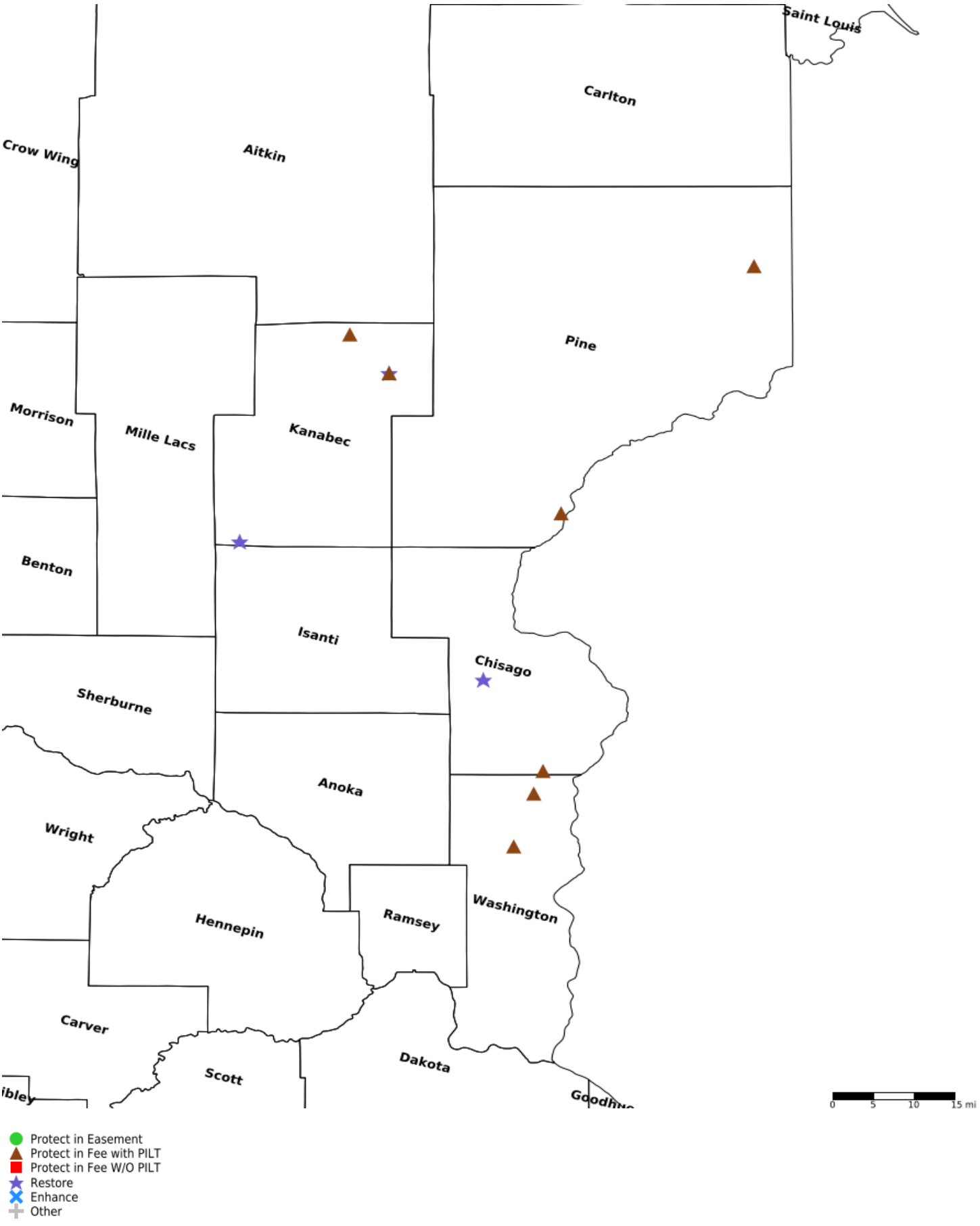
Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Kroschel WMA Addition II	Kanabec	04122205	440	$1,800,000	No
Snake River State Forest Addition	Kanabec	04223210	840	$2,250,000	No
Chengwatana State Forest Addition IV	Pine	03820212	80	$260,000	No
Bone Lake WMA	Washington	03220216	117	$2,000,000	No
Keystone Woods WMA Addition	Washington	03120219	120	$2,000,000	No

Fee Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
First Lake WMA	Chisago	03320234	160	$1,200,000	No	3	-
Nemadji State Forest Addition IV	Pine	04416228	80	$250,000	No	2	$20,000

Parcel Map


Saint Louis
Carlton
Crow Wing
Aitkin
Pine
Morrison
Mille Lacs
Kanabec
Benton
Isanti
Chisago
Sherburne
Anoka
Wright
Hennepin
Ramsey
Washington
Carver
Scott
Dakota
0
5
10
15 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

2027 Riparian Habitat Protection In the kettle and Snake River Watersheds

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - 2027 Riparian Habitat Protection In the kettle and Snake River Watersheds
Organization: Pine County Soil and Water Conservation District
Manager: Paul Swanson

Budget

Requested Amount: $4,000,000
Appropriated Amount: $1,208,000
Percentage: 30.2%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$327,500	-	$96,700	-	29.53%	-
Contracts	$42,500	-	$12,500	-	29.41%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$3,370,100	-	$1,021,800	-	30.32%	-
Easement Stewardship	$170,000	-	$50,000	-	29.41%	-
Travel	$6,900	-	$2,100	-	30.43%	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$70,100	-	$21,000	-	29.96%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$9,900	-	$3,000	-	30.3%	-
Supplies/Materials	$3,000	-	$900	-	30.0%	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$4,000,000**	**-**	**$1,208,000**	**-**	**30.2%**	**-**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 30% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	1,020	300	29.41%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$4,000,000	$1,208,000	30.2%
Enhance	-	-	-

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	1,020	300	29.41%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$4,000,000	$1,208,000	30.2%
Enhance	-	-	-

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - 16

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/19/2026

Project Title: Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - 16

Funds Recommended: $2,181,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Jennifer Tonko
Title: Executive Director
Organization: Clean River Partners
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Partners Contact

Clean River Partners: Jennifer Tonko - jennifer@cleanriverpartners.org - 507-786-3913

Great River Greening: Jennifer Grommes - jgrommes@greatrivergreening.org -

Trust for Public Land: DJ Forbes - DJ.Forbes@tpl.org -

Location Information

County Location(s): Waseca, Rice, Steele, Goodhue and Le Sueur.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Prairie

Activity types:

Enhance

Restore

Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Forest

Wetlands

Prairie

Habitat

Narrative

Abstract

The Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program will protect approximately 90 acres in fee; and restore or enhance approximately 149 acres of high-priority wildlife habitat within the Cannon River Watershed, including wetlands, prairies, forests, and river/shallow lake shoreline.

Design and Scope of Work

The Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program protects, restores, and enhances publicly accessible, high-quality habitat throughout the Cannon River Watershed (CRW), expanding opportunities for hunting, angling, and outdoor recreation within an hour's drive of more than half of Minnesota's population.

Building on previous Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) investments is central to the program's long-term strategy. The majority of acquisitions that are proposed expand on lands previously protected or restored through this partnership. Rather than pursuing isolated projects, the partnership uses a programmatic approach that identifies opportunities over time to expand wildlife management areas, connect fragmented habitats, and establish larger habitat corridors with multiple ecological and recreational benefits.

Priority parcels are selected based on their ability to provide multiple benefits simultaneously, including habitat protection for wildlife, conservation of threatened and sensitive species, hunting and fishing access, broader outdoor recreation opportunities, water quality improvement, and water storage and climate resilience benefits. Restoration and enhancement projects are selected through a combination of ecological need and the land manager's readiness and capacity to steward the site successfully in the near term.

Located south of the Twin Cities, the 1,460-square-mile CRW includes more than 800 miles of streams and rivers draining a diverse landscape of prairie, oak savanna, wetlands, and Big Woods forest. Today, much of the watershed is dominated by agricultural production and urban development, with agricultural practices and shoreline development contributing to impaired stretches of the Cannon River and associated lakes and streams.

This multi-year, multi-partner program protects and restores targeted parcels that contribute to larger complexes of forests, prairies, wetlands, lakeshore, and river corridor habitat. To date, the program has permanently protected 3,705 acres and restored or enhanced 457 acres utilizing Outdoor Heritage Funds, with an additional

1,036 acres of restoration underway.

The partnership combines complementary expertise to efficiently advance watershed-scale conservation outcomes. Clean River Partners (CRP) serves as the local watershed partner, coordinating the program and leading landowner outreach and program administration. Trust for Public Land (TPL) targets large wetland/upland complexes, rare biomes, shallow lakes, river shoreline, and lands adjacent to existing public land for fee-title acquisition, conveying lands to the DNR or other appropriate public entities. Great River Greening (GRG) collaborates with DNR, municipal, and USFWS partners to evaluate and implement restoration and enhancement projects through invasive species removal, wetland restoration, and native vegetation establishment.

The partnership's long-term, programmatic approach has created a cascading conservation effect within the watershed: permanent protection of one property often inspires neighboring landowners to pursue conservation opportunities. For example, the partnership utilized ML15 funds to acquire an 18-acre addition to the Warsaw WMA, protecting native dry bedrock prairie and oak savanna. This proposal builds on that investment through the proposed acquisition of an additional 120 acres. Additionally, building on the newly created 200-acre Sungina WMA (funded via ML23/ML24), this proposal seeks to acquire an additional 90 acres.

This proposal will protect approximately 90 acres in fee and restore or enhance approximately 149 acres.

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

The areas targeted by TPL have been identified and prioritized through state, regional, and local natural resource plans due to their high biodiversity qualities and connectivity to existing public lands. Protection will occur through fee title acquisition and will target Big Woods, oak savannas, wetlands, and sensitive shoreline communities within the CRW. GRG will conduct significant habitat restoration and enhancement work on protected conservation lands identified by DNR and local governments within the watershed. The aim is to improve habitat values for wildlife and Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), including birds using the Mississippi River migratory corridor, pollinators, amphibians, and reptiles. Work will restore and enhance riverine, forest, wetland, oak savanna, and prairie habitat at 10 conservation sites.

Protection, restoration and/or enhancement of these significant parcels will provide critical habitat for game species, including upland birds (dove, turkey, pheasant, and woodcock), white-tailed deer, migratory waterfowl (mallard, canvasback, wood duck, hooded merganser, pintail, and lesser scaup), and aquatic species (trout, northern pike, black crappie, bluegill, and walleye). Protection will also provide access to diverse recreational experiences including duck, pheasant, turkey, and deer hunting as well as river, stream, and lake fishing. Nongame wildlife, including SGCN, that also benefit from this effort include: bald eagle, Bell's vireo, cerulean warbler, loggerhead shrike, Sandhill crane, red-headed woodpecker, greater yellowlegs, buffbreasted sandpiper, rusty patched bumble bee, Blanding's turtle, wood turtle, and mudpuppies.

Working alongside the MN DNR and USFWS, our partnership aims to conserve habitat along streams and rivers where SGCN reptile and amphibian species have been located. Enhancing riparian corridors will increase nesting habitats for migrating waterfowl and reptile species. Restoration and conversion of tiled crop fields back to tallgrass prairie potholes will extend vital habitat for grassland bird species, which have seen a 40% decline in population since the 1960's.

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

Conservation opportunities within the watershed are highly time-sensitive. Many proposed acquisitions are only possible because willing landowners, available funding, adjacent public land priorities, and restoration capacity are aligned at this moment. These windows are often short-lived and difficult to recreate once properties change ownership or land use. Prior OHF investments have generated significant conservation momentum: as habitat complexes expand and restoration work becomes visible on the landscape, neighboring landowners increasingly pursue protection opportunities. Maintaining continuity in funding is critical to converting these emerging opportunities into permanent conservation outcomes. Several proposed acquisitions are strategically important parcels that strengthen existing public lands and habitat corridors, while restoration projects are prioritized based on both ecological significance and partner readiness to ensure high-quality implementation.

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

Southern Minnesota, and specifically the Cannon River Watershed, has a rich agricultural presence due to the fertile soils found throughout the region. Large portions of corn and soybean fields limit forage for pollinators, habitat for migrating waterfowl, and threaten water quality for aquatic species. This partnership aims to protect vulnerable waterways through adjacent land protection, restoration of depleted wetlands and floodplains, conversion of agricultural fields to prairies or forests, along with enhancement of degraded public lands to establish and improve thriving ecosystems.

This program has demonstrated its ability to expand habitat corridors and limit habitat fragmentation, establishing nine new WMAs, one AMA, and expanding 11 WMAs since its inception. The program uses information from the Wildlife Action Network, Minnesota County Biological Survey, and several analysis tools to identify priority lands for protection and restoration, creating and expanding conservation corridors and habitat complexes. In addition, we will consult several landscape-level planning efforts such as the Statewide Wildlife Action Plan, Cannon River Watershed Landscape Stewardship Plan, the Cannon River Watershed - Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS), and the Cannon River Watershed Comprehensive Management Plan.

Heading into Phase 16, our programmatic approach has positioned us for additional opportunities to build on important habitat corridors.

First, the partnership is helping establish an emerging Straight River habitat corridor through coordinated acquisitions, restoration, and enhancement activities that collectively improve habitat quality, protect threatened species, and benefit water quality. Proposed acquisitions at Medford WMA II and Faribault WMA II will expand the amount of connected public land along this corridor, while restoration at the newly acquired Somerset WMA addition will improve adjacent habitat conditions for wildlife and selected SGCN.

Second, the proposal continues long-term investment in the health and expansion of OHF lands. Warsaw WMA was first protected through this program in 2018, which created the foundation for additional acquisition and restoration opportunities currently proposed. Planned restoration will protect and enhance remnant prairie habitat while improving surrounding prairie and forest ecosystems. Additionally, this proposal seeks to expand the habitat on the recently acquired 200-acre Sungina WMA.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Prairie

Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

Outcomes

Programs in prairie region:

Key core parcels are protected for fish, game and other wildlife ~ *Core parcels are identified in partnership with the DNR, counties, and the partners of the Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program. Success will be determined based on the acreage of lands protected, restored, and enhanced and the percentage of protected lands in the watershed.*

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

Funding requested by the Partnership will not supplant or substitute for any previous non-legacy funding used for the same purpose.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

TPL will convey all fee-title land in this proposal to the DNR for permanent stewardship. Once land has been acquired and conveyed, initial site development and restoration of these lands will begin. Estimated costs for initial restoration or enhancement work are included in this proposal. TPL will work with the DNR to finalize a restoration management plan, and Actual implementation will occur in future years under DNR leadership. These properties will be managed and maintained by the DNR according to their guidelines.

In collaboration with DNR, County, and USFWS personnel, parcels targeted for restoration will be evaluated by GRG to determine existing and desired conditions for each site. Information gathered will be used to develop site-specific scope of work plans for restoring ecologically desired habitats. Project management plans will detail the methods and practices to be used and a timeline for the successful completion of each site/project along with management guidelines and maintenance outline for the future. After funds are expended, sites will be in a condition that the landowner will be able to maintain.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2030	GRG - OHF	Continue R/E and begin stewardship. Target actions to maintain habitat.	Restorative action to correct damage as needed	Evaluate progress and determine if additional actions are needed
2029	GRG - OHF	Initiate R/E work	Continue R/E depending on appropriate methods and time of year	Continue R/E and begin stewardship as needed using appropriate methods and dependent on time of year

2028	GRG - OHF	Perform site evaluation and assessment in collaboration with DNR	Develop R/E plan for property. Begin monitoring	Initiate site preparation from R/E work. Continue monitoring
2030	TPL - DNR	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation	-	-
2029	TPL - DNR	Develop restoration/management plan for property	Restore and steward property for habitat and public recreation	-
2028	TPL - OHF & DNR	Post property	Development restoration/management plan for property	-

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

Protecting, restoring, and enhancing diverse and resilient habitats benefits all Minnesotans. It keeps our air and water cleaner, mitigates the impacts of climate change, and conserves the biological diversity that belongs to everyone. Public land provides an opportunity for recreation and health to those who do not have access to private natural lands, whether that be for hunting, fishing, hiking, or other outdoor pursuits.

This program involves, engages, and benefits BIPOC and other diverse communities through focused events that leverage Outdoor Heritage Funds. For example, recent efforts, funded through other sources, have focused on increasing the engagement of BIPOC and diverse communities across the watershed in volunteer events at sites protected and restored using past OHF appropriations. Additionally, also through different funding sources, some of this program's recent acquisition and restoration projects focus on protection of the environment and water quality while creating much-needed recreational opportunities targeting disadvantaged areas (based upon housing, income and wastewater thresholds) with significant BIPOC communities.

Our partners actively encourage residents who live near habitat restoration sites and create programs specifically for people from diverse backgrounds, opening up opportunities to pursue environmental careers such as GRG's Engaging a Diverse Population Program. Another example of this is TPL's mentored hunting and angling program. In partnership with the MN Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, TPL is hosting and facilitating mentored hunting, angling, and foraging opportunities for diverse communities on public lands and waters across MN with a focus on lands protected with Outdoor Heritage Funds. Our target audience for mentees are diverse and historically marginalized communities, with a particular outreach focus on BIPOC communities. Our program mentors are individuals from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds as well, helping to reinforce and foster a sense of representation, belonging, and inclusion in outdoor spaces.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**
No

Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:
We will follow the County/Township Board notification processes as directed by the current statutory language.

Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?
Yes

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 or on lands to be acquired in this program?
Yes

Where does the activity take place?

WMA

SNA

AMA

County/Municipal

State Forests

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
No

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?
No

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion?
Yes

Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:
NA

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

State of MN

County

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

WMA

SNA

AMA

State Forest

County Forest

What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
1-2

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?
No

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?
No

Initial restoration activities will be conducted by the MN DNR through DNR IDP. TPL will assess the full R/E needs of each parcel protected through this appropriation. If R/E needs exist, funding for those projects will be incorporated into a future proposal.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?
No

Explain how and when the restoration/enhancement work will be completed and identify the source of funding:
Initial restoration activities will be conducted by the MN DNR through DNR IDP. TPL will assess the full R/E needs of each parcel protected through this appropriation. If R/E needs exist, funding for those projects will be incorporated into a future proposal.

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Restoration and enhancement	June 30, 2032
Initial site development	Fall 2032
Land acquired	June 30, 2031
Landowner negotiations, agreements and due diligence	June 30, 2029
Finalize restoration and enhancement plans	June 30, 2028

Date of Final Report Submission: 11/01/2032

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$257,000	-	-	$257,000
Contracts	$626,000	-	-	$626,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$892,000	-	-	$892,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$12,000	$3,000	Private, Private	$15,000
Professional Services	$25,000	-	-	$25,000
Direct Support Services	$85,000	$113,400	Private, Private	$198,400
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$25,000	-	-	$25,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$4,000	-	-	$4,000
Supplies/Materials	$241,000	-	-	$241,000
DNR IDP	$14,000	-	-	$14,000
Grand Total	**$2,181,000**	**$116,400**	**-**	**$2,297,400**

Partner: Clean River Partners

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$20,000	-	-	$20,000
Contracts	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	$1,000	Private	$1,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$5,000	-	-	$5,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$25,000**	**$1,000**	**-**	**$26,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
CRP Staff	0.4	3.0	$20,000	-	-	$20,000

Partner: Great River Greening

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$142,000	-	-	$142,000
Contracts	$616,000	-	-	$616,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$12,000	-	-	$12,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$63,000	$96,400	Private	$159,400
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$4,000	-	-	$4,000
Supplies/Materials	$241,000	-	-	$241,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$1,078,000**	**$96,400**	**-**	**$1,174,400**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
GRG Staff	0.39	5.0	$142,000	-	-	$142,000

Partner: Trust for Public Land

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$95,000	-	-	$95,000
Contracts	$10,000	-	-	$10,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$892,000	-	-	$892,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	$2,000	Private	$2,000
Professional Services	$25,000	-	-	$25,000
Direct Support Services	$17,000	$17,000	Private	$34,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$25,000	-	-	$25,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	$14,000	-	-	$14,000
Grand Total	**$1,078,000**	**$19,000**	**-**	**$1,097,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Project and Legal Staff	0.13	4.0	$95,000	-	-	$95,000

Amount of Request: $2,181,000
Amount of Leverage: $116,400
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 5.34%
DSS + Personnel: $342,000
As a % of the total request: 15.68%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
We will prioritize acquisitions with owners who are on a deadline or are further along in the title process. We will prioritize restoration with restoration plans that are closer to completion.

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:
The partnership provides privately sourced leverage for a portion of DSS and of travel costs. The partnership also seeks various state, local and private funds to acquire property and conduct enhancements/restorations.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Since some costs are fixed, a somewhat greater than proportionate reduction in activities and acres would occur. Restoration and enhancement acres and budgets would be reduced in a way that meets the needs of the remaining parcels.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Program management costs (personnel, travel, and DSS expenses) will be reduced, but not proportionately because program coordination and oversight costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount. CRP's program administration is consistent regardless of acres protected or restored in order to manage the program and maintain partner and community.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
TPL's contract line includes potential site clean-up and initial restoration activities.
GRG's contract line includes restoration/enhancement contracts by service providers.

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

Appraisals

Other : Environmental Site Assessments, Mineral Assessments, Mapping

Surveys

Fee Acquisition

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?
1-2

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
Yes

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging
NA

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?
Clean River Partners' DSS rate was approved by the DNR in 2024.

TPL's DSS request is based upon its federal rate which has been approved by the MN DNR and 50% of these costs are requested from the OHF grant while 50% is contributed as privately sourced leverage.

GRG's DSS rate includes the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget, and was approved by the DNR in 2024. A portion not exceeding 50% of these costs are requested from the grant and the balance is contributed as leverage.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?
Hand tools, saws, brush cutters, personal protective equipment, burn equipment, seed collection equipment, repairs and other necessary equipment to complete restoration and enhancement activities.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?
No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	17	96	-	-	113
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	90	90
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	3	33	-	36
Total	**17**	**99**	**33**	**90**	**239**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	$141,600	$332,900	-	-	$474,500
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$1,090,500	$1,090,500
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	$56,000	$560,000	-	$616,000
Total	**$141,600**	**$388,900**	**$560,000**	**$1,090,500**	**$2,181,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	113	-	113
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	90	-	90
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	36	-	36
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**239**	**-**	**239**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	$474,500	-	$474,500
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$1,090,500	-	$1,090,500
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	$616,000	-	$616,000
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$2,181,000**	**-**	**$2,181,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	$8,329	$3,467	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$12,116
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	$18,666	$16,969	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	$4,199	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$12,116	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	$17,111	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

1

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
No

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
Trust for Public Land works with its public partners to identify and prioritize projects that meet their objectives and are on their priority lists. Criteria includes whether the land provides critical habitat for game and non-game species and quality public recreational opportunities, presence of unique plants and animals species (including SGCN), goals of conservation plans, adjacency to other public land or habitat complexes, existence of local support, immediacy of threats, landowner willingness and time frame.

Great River Greening works with land owning entities (public and protected private) and interested stakeholders to identify parcels where there is a need for restoration or enhancement of lands and water resources. Parcels are selected using the following criteria: permanently protected status (WMA, AMA, SNA, Forestry, County Conservation, etc.), ecological and habitat value and potential (biodiversity, size and location), congruence with existing plans and priority areas, willing and committed landowners (demonstrated through leveraged match), and leveraging opportunities.

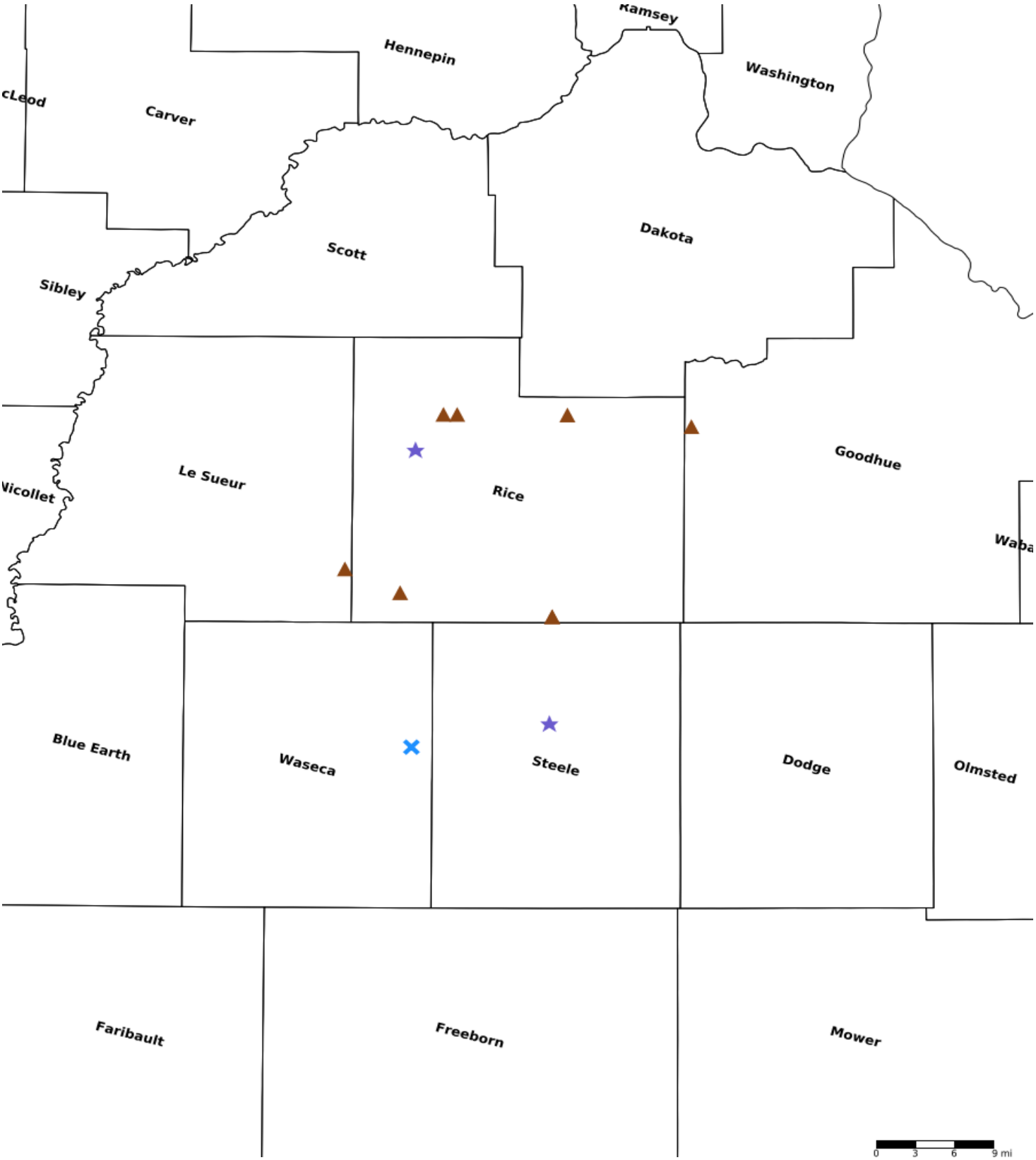
Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
Big Woods WMA addition	Rice	11122223	60	$337,000	Yes	50 acres prairie restoration, 6 acres wetland restoration, and 4 acres prairie enhancement
Somerset WMA	Steele	10720216	78	$544,000	Yes	45 acres crop conversion, 21 woody management, 12 acres Wetland restoration
Blowers Park	Waseca	10722226	11	$197,000	Yes	3 acres woody invasive management and 8 acres of Oak savanna enhancement

Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Warsaw WMA	Goodhue	11118207	131	$900,000	No
Horseshoe Lake WMA	Le Sueur	10923212	127	$1,200,000	No
Faribault WMA II	Rice	10920233	37	$185,000	No
Medford WMA II	Rice	10920233	113	$1,500,000	No
Sakatah WMA Addition	Rice	10922222	62	$589,000	No
Spring Brook WMA	Rice	11120203	218	$2,180,000	No
Sungina WMA Addition	Rice	11121206	100	$710,000	No
Sungina WMA Addition II	Rice	11121205	58	$599,900	No

Parcel Map


Ramsey
Hennepin
Washington
cLeod
Carver
Scott
Dakota
Sibley
Le Sueur
Rice
Goodhue
Nicollet
Waba
Blue Earth
Waseca
Steele
Dodge
Olmsted
Faribault
Freeborn
Mower
0 3 6 9 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - 16

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - Cannon River Watershed Habitat Protection and Restoration Program - 16
Organization: Clean River Partners
Manager: Jennifer Tonko

Budget

Requested Amount: $12,138,300
Appropriated Amount: $2,181,000
Percentage: 17.97%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$1,038,000	$2,200	$257,000	-	24.76%	0.0%
Contracts	$3,866,000	-	$626,000	-	16.19%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$6,000,000	-	$892,000	-	14.87%	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	$39,000	$3,000	$12,000	$3,000	30.77%	100.0%
Professional Services	$102,000	-	$25,000	-	24.51%	-
Direct Support Services	$348,300	$304,800	$85,000	$113,400	24.4%	37.2%
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$180,000	-	$25,000	-	13.89%	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$15,000	-	$4,000	-	26.67%	-
Supplies/Materials	$445,000	-	$241,000	-	54.16%	-
DNR IDP	$105,000	-	$14,000	-	13.33%	-
Grand Total	**$12,138,300**	**$310,000**	**$2,181,000**	**$116,400**	**17.97%**	**37.55%**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Since some costs are fixed, a somewhat greater than proportionate reduction in activities and acres would occur. Restoration and enhancement acres and budgets would be reduced in a way that meets the needs of the remaining parcels.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Program management costs (personnel, travel, and DSS expenses) will be reduced, but not proportionately, because program coordination and oversight costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount. CRP's program administration is consistent regardless of acres protected or restored in order to manage the program and maintain partner and community relationships.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Since some costs are fixed, a somewhat greater than proportionate reduction in activities and acres would occur. Restoration and enhancement acres and budgets would be reduced in a way that meets the needs of the remaining parcels.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Program management costs (personnel, travel, and DSS expenses) will be reduced, but not proportionately because program coordination and oversight costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount. CRP's program administration is consistent regardless of acres protected or restored in order to manage the program and maintain partner and community.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	152	113	74.34%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	600	90	15.0%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	0	-	-
Enhance	319	36	11.29%

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	$1,493,000	$474,500	31.78%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$7,165,300	$1,090,500	15.22%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	$3,480,000	$616,000	17.7%

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	152	113	74.34%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	600	90	15.0%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	0	-	-
Enhance	319	36	11.29%

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	$1,493,000	$474,500	31.78%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$7,165,300	$1,090,500	15.22%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	$3,480,000	$616,000	17.7%

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Dakota County Habitat Protection/Restoration Phase IX

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/19/2026

Project Title: Dakota County Habitat Protection/Restoration Phase IX

Funds Recommended: $2,282,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Alexander Scurto
Title: Senior Project Manager
Organization: Dakota County
Address: 14955 Galaxie Avenue
City: Apple Valley, MN 55124
Email: alex.scurto@co.dakota.mn.us
Office Number: 952-891-7827
Mobile Number: 630-577-7767
Fax Number:
Website: dakotacountymn.gov

Location Information

County Location(s): Dakota.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Metro / Urban

Southeast Forest

Activity types:

Protect in Easement

Restore

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Habitat

Wetlands

Prairie

Forest

Narrative

Abstract

This project will restore approximately 866 acres of permanently protected habitat and acquire approximately 105 acres of permanent conservation easements. Project sites include converting cultivated areas to native habitat in cites and townships throughout the county, including forest, grassland, riparian areas, and other wetlands. This initiative includes identified sites and flexibility for opportunities that will arise. This project will allow the County to continue its integrated comprehensive and successful land conservation efforts through its partnership with the LSOHC and others.

Design and Scope of Work

Historic settlement, modern-day development, and agriculture have replaced, degraded, and fragmented natural resource systems throughout Dakota County. The project scope and scale encompass some of the best natural resource features found in the metropolitan region, across urban, suburban, and rural landscapes. A sound fiscal and prescriptive ecological systems approach to conservation, attempts to balance the interests, rights, and responsibilities of private landowners, with the public's concerns about water and habitat quality and protection.

The November 2020, Land Conservation Plan for Dakota County (Plan) collectively identifies, coordinates, and prioritizes future land protection and management needs on public and private properties throughout the County. This Plan reflects one of four County Board goals of "a healthy environment with quality natural areas." This Plan is being incorporated into a comprehensive, County-wide Natural Resource Systems Plan in 2026, through which the County continues to effectively work with a variety of agencies and organizations to implement land protection. Since 2002, the County approved plans and implemented programs to preserve natural areas and quality working land. The County developed conservation policy, project evaluation criteria, and practices to acquire, monitor, and administer 127 conservation easements, totaling 9,785 acres, and acquire or assist other public entities in acquiring 33 properties totaling 2,274 acres, for almost 12,000 total acres permanently protected. The Plan identifies over 75,000 acres of important conservation lands within 24 preliminary Conservation Focus Areas (CFAs), of which 32,500 acres are already protected. The CFAs encompass a wide variety of habitats throughout the County, including 28 specific native communities, with 25 Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Land outside the CFAs is also eligible for conservation, if it meets certain criteria.

All permanent easements require Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMPs) that reflect existing ecosystem health and recommend potential restoration management strategies, including workplans and budgets. Initial implementation is also required, using an adopted public-private funding formula that includes a maintenance component. A Natural Resource Management Agreement (MA) is signed by the landowner and County, identifying NRMP priorities, activities, responsibilities, shared costs, and schedules. The proposed habitat restoration and enhancement projects in this funding request are based on these workplans. This project has direct benefits to fish, game, and wildlife, beyond increased and interconnected habitat.

Additionally, the City-County Conservation Collaborative (CCCC or 4C) initiative was launched in 2021, with the County and cities being the primary participants. The first application round resulted in eight natural habitat restoration project applications from five cities. NRMPs were developed for each project, and implementation has begun in several suburban park natural areas that do not include park facilities or paved trails.

The proposed and anticipated acquisition projects involve riparian areas along the Minnesota, Mississippi, Cannon and Vermillion Rivers. Additional habitat focuses include woodlands, wetlands, hydric soil areas, and unique landscape features and ecosystems.

Environmental Audits are completed for all projects. Baseline Property Reports are prepared for easements that record the condition of the easement area at the time it's acquired by the County.

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

The proposal integrates a number of state and regional County plans, involving different aspects of habitat and wildlife. In 2017, the County Board approved a Natural Resource Management System Plan (NRMSP) for all regional parks, regional greenways and conservation easements located throughout the County. Vegetation, water, and wildlife were the three main elements for each land type. The NRMSP identified rare and endangered species, and species of greatest conservation need throughout the County, based on different data sources. The NRMSP includes different Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP) templates of each property type that will provide much more detail for individual sites that typically include a variety of habitat and plant community types. The 2020 Land Conservation Plan for Dakota County (LCP) identifies over 42,300 acres of unprotected land within 24 preliminary Conservation Focus Areas (CFAs), including more than 14,000 acres in 90 potential wetland restoration basins. The CFAs encompass a wide variety of habitats throughout the County, including 28 specific native communities and 25 Species of Greatest Conservation Need. These habitats/native communities and associated species include, but are not limited to: Forest - northern long-eared bat, American woodcock, oven bird, rose-breasted grosbeak, least flycatcher, red- shouldered hawk; Prairies and Grasslands- badger, Franklin's ground squirrel, prairie vole, loggerhead shrike, eastern meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow and regal fritillary; Lakes, Ponds and Rivers- common snapping turtle and smooth soft shell turtle; Wetlands- sedge wren, sand hill crane, Blanding's turtle, and dragonflies. The County continues to assemble baseline data and will prioritize the habitats preferred by these species for acquisition, restoration and enhancement activities. The County is currently drafting a new Natural Systems Plan that will combine the NRMSP and the LCP into one comprehensive plan to guide natural resource protection and management into the future.

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

Dakota County works with willing sellers and wants to continue the momentum of its ongoing conservation programs, with an increased focus on natural resource management. The Land Conservation Plan for Dakota County includes a valuable opportunity to work even more collaboratively with other public entities, specifically through the City-County Conservation Collaborative. Staff continues to see marginal agricultural land converted to row crops and installation of more drain tile. Creating larger scale restoration areas within the rural agricultural landscape can provide multiple public benefits. Residential development has increased significantly in some cities, and natural areas are attractive focal points for new development. Through its programs, the County can expand protected habitats and close gaps between previously protected lands within multipurpose corridors.

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

There was significant overlap between the County Biological Survey, the 2002 Farmland and Natural Area Protection Plan, and the Metro Conservation Corridors in identifying habitat complexes and key corridors. Based on updated land cover mapping, DNR rare species data, the Vermillion Corridor Plan, new SNA analysis, previously protected areas, County and local comprehensive plans, watershed plans, and park and greenway plans, the County has refined its priority natural areas and the Metro Conservation Corridor Focus Areas. Using Dakota County's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools and expertise, County staff can further prioritize areas where important protection and improvement opportunities exist, using other available data layers, such as ownership parcels, soils, aspect, historical photography, and LiDAR. Project selection criteria have been revised to reflect this refined vision, and further refinements will occur as up-to-date information and data are collected. The Natural Systems Plan being drafted currently, will reflect the most current data and information available and include the 24 primary Conservation Focus Areas and several additional sub-areas, based on existing water resources, other natural habitats and existing protected land where the County plans to target resources.

In a substantial portion of original natural landscapes in the County were significantly altered through agriculture. Extensive wetland areas were drained, filled, and tiled. County staff consulted with BWSR and DNR staff to use LiDAR-based GIS tools to target wetland restoration projects. The tools require a hydrologically-conditioned digital elevation model (DEM) that was previously unavailable within the County. Dakota County staff created a "base-level" hydrologically-conditioned DEM and ran a series of ArcGIS tools developed by the DNR/BWSR. The GIS tools predicted hydric soils and wetlands via the Compound Topographic Index, smoothed ditches, and created ditch plugs in the landscape to generate storage areas. The resulting areas were inventoried and prioritized based on area (acres) and volume (acre-feet). Then, a GIS dataset of known cultivated hydric soils, developed by the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District was used to refine the inventory. Finally, a map of restoration sites and list of property owners for 4,502 acres was developed for restoration program outreach and implementation.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Minnesota's Wildlife Management Area Acquisition - The Next 50 Years

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Metro / Urban

Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

Southeast Forest

Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *The County developed an integrated, long-term habitat protection system involving public*

and private lands to provide multiple public benefits. Enlarging and improving existing protected habitat complexes and providing key connections will continue to be a focus, with protected acres and shoreline as success indicators. The County will prioritize land protection and improvement efforts, in part, based on wildlife species by devoting staff time and resources to create baseline wildlife and habitat quality information and monitoring indicator and other species seasonally/annually to determine if our efforts are producing the desired results over time and to adapt or re-prioritize as appropriate.

Programs in southeast forest region:

Healthier populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species *~ A small portion of the County is included in this region. Enlarging and improving existing protected habitat complexes and providing key connections will continue to be a focus, with protected acres and shoreline as success indicators. The County will prioritize its land protection and improvement efforts, in part, based on priority wildlife species. It will devote staff time and resources to create baseline wildlife and habitat quality information and monitoring indicator and other species seasonally/annually to determine if our efforts are producing the desired results over time and to adapt or re-prioritize as appropriate.*

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

Dakota County's request for funding is not supplanting, nor is it a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

The Dakota County Board has maintained a remarkable, 24-year commitment to land conservation, and established "a healthy environment and quality natural areas" as one of four priority goals. Adopting the 2020 Land Conservation Plan for Dakota County (LCP), maintaining dedicated natural resource staff, reorganizing departments to effectively achieve land conservation goals, approving capital improvement program budgets, and providing an operating budget for annual monitoring, are further evidence that the County has the interest, capacity and commitment to sustain this work. The County's Natural Resource Management System Plan (NRMSP) commits to maintaining areas after restoration and enhancement investments are made.

Approximately half the land protection/restoration work will occur on public lands and half on private lands, all designed to achieve maximum, fiscally efficient, conservation benefits. Relationship building, developing and implementing Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMPs) and Management Agreements, and annual monitoring, provide opportunities to share updated natural resource information and best management practices with landowners, and achieve a higher likelihood of increased private stewardship. The NRMSP, using a public/private cost-share formula, is further testament to this commitment. This comprehensive wildlife habitat and water quality approach on public and private lands provides the best opportunity to effectively protect and

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2032	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements and/or fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects, and use adaptive management for restoration and enhancement activities	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years

2031	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements and/or fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects, and use adaptive management for restoration and enhancement activities	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years
2030	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements and/or fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects, and use adaptive management for restoration and enhancement activities	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years
2029	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements and/or fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects, and use adaptive management for restoration and enhancement activities	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years
2028	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements and/or fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects, and use adaptive management for restoration and enhancement activities	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years
2027	State, County, landowner or other project partner contribution	Restore and enhance existing and newly protected lands, and acquire easements and/or fee title	Monitor easements and restoration projects, and use adaptive management for restoration and enhancement activities	Monitor required landowner maintenance of restored areas over at least the next three years

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

The Land Conservation Plan for Dakota County includes goals, strategies and tactics designed to increase and enhance public involvement in natural resource protection and management and enhanced recreational access to conservation land. The new project eligibility and scoring criteria, developed to evaluate Land Conservation Program project applications, includes incentives when a project will provide natural habitat and open space opportunities for underserved communities that include BIPOC. Distance from a qualified census tract will be used to determine the project score for this factor.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Who will manage the easement?
The landowner(s), with support provided by Dakota County and partner agencies as capacity and funding allows.

Who will be the easement holder?
Dakota County.

What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
5-10.

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?
Yes

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 or on lands to be acquired in this program?
Yes

Where does the activity take place?

WMA

SNA

AMA

Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

County/Municipal

Public Waters

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
Yes

Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:
There might be situations where portions of the property may be cultivated. As part of a negotiated sale, the owner may be allowed to continue cultivating the same land for a short, defined time as defined and allowed in the Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP). In other situations, it may be advantageous to allow a final soybean crop, which can enhance the restoration process by reducing weeds and residue. Also, in some NRMP-approved situations, food plots for wildlife are allowed within a natural area easement.

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Will the eased land be open for public use?
Yes

Describe the expected public use:
The County has acquired some easements that are open for limited public use. In all cases, the decision to allow public use is determined by the landowner, and is often granted to responsible, conservation-minded and purposed groups and individuals.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?
Yes

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:
It is possible that some acquisition projects may result in the creation of new, soft-surface trails for low-impact recreational use by landowners and/or allowed guests, and in part, to assist in access for natural resource restoration, management and ongoing maintenance.

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?
The landowner will be responsible for all maintenance. A jointly developed NRMP will determine any changes to trails and roads. Review of trails and roads are part of the County's annual monitoring process.

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?
Yes

Currently, none of the identified "protect in easement" parcels are listed on the "restore/enhance" parcel list. However, once acquired, Dakota County may be interested in adding those parcels to the approved "restore/enhance" parcel list via an amendment if funding and capacity allows.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?
Yes

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Restoration	June 30, 2032
Easement and/or Fee Title Acquisition	June 30, 2031

Date of Final Report Submission: 10/01/2032

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft

accomplishment plan; and

(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	-	$840,000	Dakota County	$840,000
Contracts	$1,582,000	-	-	$1,582,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$650,000	-	-	$650,000
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	$49,000	-	-	$49,000
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$1,000	-	-	$1,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$2,282,000**	**$840,000**	**-**	**$3,122,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Land Acquisition/Parks Natural Resources/Real Estate Office/ County Attorney/Survey/Finance/ Contracts/Support Staff/Etc.	1.4	5.0	-	$840,000	Dakota County	$840,000

Amount of Request: $2,282,000
Amount of Leverage: $840,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 36.81%
DSS + Personnel: -
As a % of the total request: 0.0%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
Dakota County's program is structured to be flexible and will accommodate a reduced appropriation by scaling back each proposed activity. Easement acquisition extent and frequency will be reduced to fit within budgeted amounts, and restoration work will also be reduced to accomplish time sensitive and high priority tasks only.

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:
Dakota County is contributing all County staff time, equivalent to approximately 1.4 FTEs over five years, totaling at least $840,000 in value. Landowner and city contributions are also expected but are not currently factored into the total leverage amount.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
The scaling may not proportionately reduce acres and activities, as County staff can't anticipate what project applications will be received, and which ones will move forward to completion. If this proposal is scaled back, County staff can only estimate what the lower acreages and lesser activities might be.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
The scaling may not proportionately reduce personnel and DDS expenses, because with a voluntary program, County staff can't anticipate what project applications will be received, and which ones will move forward to completion. It's possible that many smaller projects could take the place of fewer larger projects.

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
The amount noted in the contracts line is inclusive of all anticipated expenses for restoration and enhancement services and native plant materials. Dakota County plans to enter into agreements with qualified contractors who will be conducting restoration activities on the identified restoration parcels based on the current management plan(s).

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

Appraisals

Design/Engineering

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?
No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	70	124	343	329	866
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	21	62	10	12	105
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**91**	**186**	**353**	**341**	**971**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	$152,100	$197,400	$552,500	$680,000	$1,582,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$132,500	$322,500	$145,000	$100,000	$700,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$284,600**	**$519,900**	**$697,500**	**$780,000**	**$2,282,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	798	-	68	-	-	866
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	105	-	0	-	-	105
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**903**	**-**	**68**	**-**	**-**	**971**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	$1,367,000	-	$215,000	-	-	$1,582,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$700,000	-	-	-	-	$700,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$2,067,000**	**-**	**$215,000**	**-**	**-**	**$2,282,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	$2,172	$1,591	$1,610	$2,066
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$6,309	$5,201	$14,500	$8,333
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	$1,713	-	$3,161	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$6,666	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
Yes - Sign up criteria is attached

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
Relative to acquisition parcels, the County provides annual public notices to solicit pre-applications from willing landowners. Targeted mailings will be sent to chosen Conservation Focus Areas identified in the Land Conservation Plan for Dakota County (LCP). Other projects are identified through adopted park or greenway master plans.

Applications are evaluated for eligibility. Eligible applicants meet with County staff to discuss the Land Conservation Program in detail. Final applications are submitted for evaluation, scoring and ranking against other applications, and recommendations for continued consideration. County criteria were developed to reflect the LCP and are used to score projects based on location, natural resource components, financial considerations, commitment to stewardship, and ongoing habitat restoration and management. Recommended projects are appraised to determine easement or fee title value. Accepted offers from the County to purchase easements or fee title result in title work, surveys, legal description creation, and preparing jointly developed Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMPs) and baseline Property Reports for each easement project. Easement NRMPs are implemented through jointly developed Natural Resource Management Agreements between the County and the landowner that establish work plan responsibilities, mutual contributions toward restoration, and ongoing maintenance responsibilities. Relative to restoration parcels, County staff work with landowners and other partners most interested in restoring and enhancing natural resources on their property and identify restoration activities where significant need is apparent or sensitive natural resources are located.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

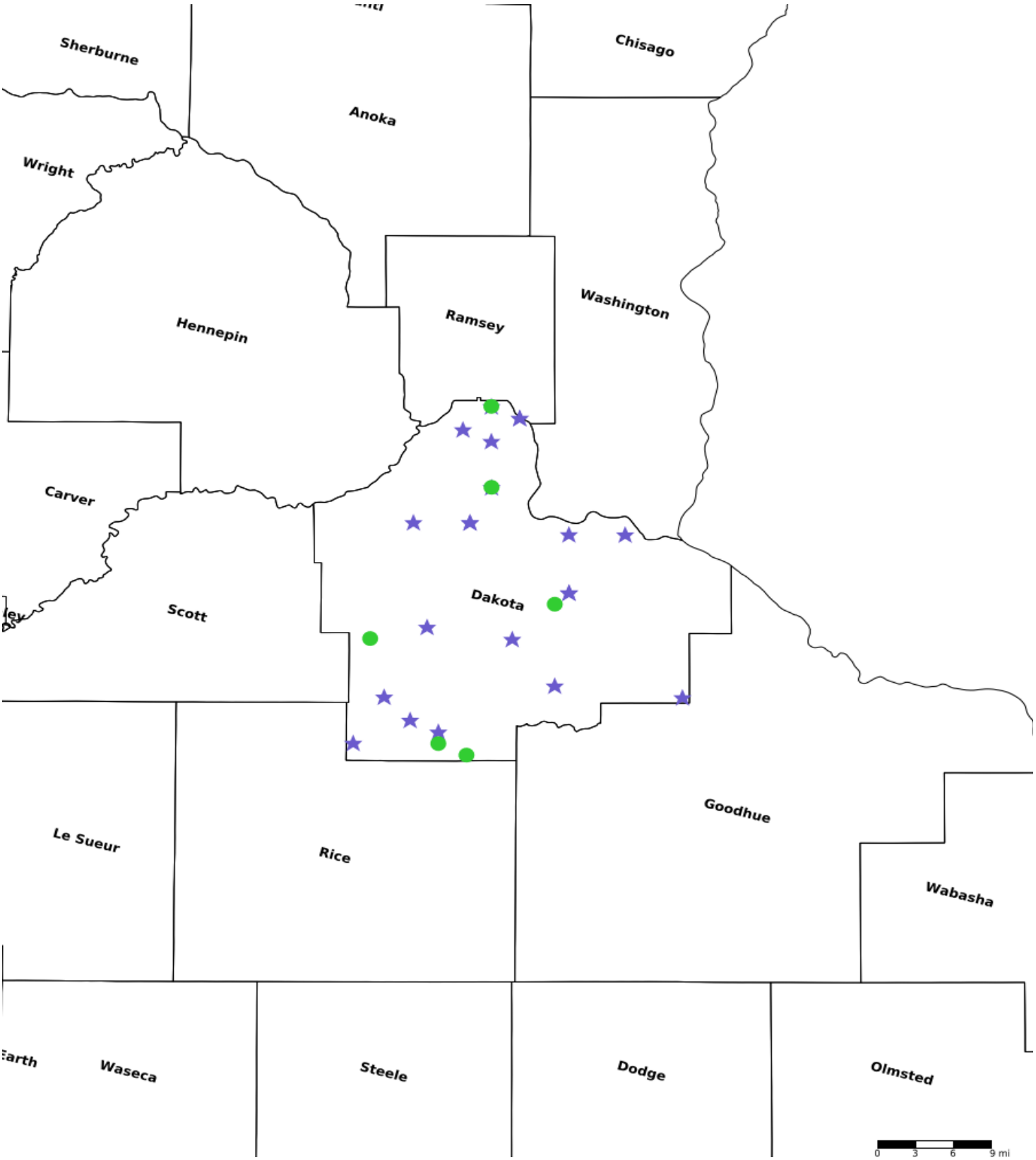
Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
4C - Harmon-Salem	Dakota	02822232	39	$25,000	Yes	City of Inver Grove Heights - Continued Habitat restoration.
4C - Mississippi River Greenway Sites	Dakota	02822222	63	$85,000	Yes	City of Inver Grove Heights - Continued Habitat restoration.
4C - Seidl's	Dakota	02822222	36	$10,000	Yes	City of Inver Grove Heights - Continued Habitat restoration.
Benjamin	Dakota	11517220	32	$60,000	Yes	Nininger Township - Forest and Prairie restoration.
Boucher	Dakota	11418215	12	$100,000	Yes	Vermillion Township - Continued Habitat restoration.
Chub Creek Park Conservation Area (Wicklund)	Dakota	11219218	59	$70,000	Yes	Waterford Township - Continued Prairie, Wetland and Forest restoration.
Coughlin	Dakota	11220219	40	$176,000	Yes	Greenvale Township - Wetland, Forest and Habitat restoration.
Dodge Nature Center	Dakota	02823225	18	$100,000	Yes	City of Mendota Heights - Continued Habitat restoration.

Haskell Street	Dakota	02822217	1	$10,000	Yes	City of West St. Paul - Continued Habitat restoration.
ISD200	Dakota	11418215	51	$25,000	Yes	Vermillion Township - Continued Prairie and Wetland restoration.
Jennings	Dakota	11320233	49	$70,000	Yes	Eureka Township - Continued Prairie and Forest restoration.
Johnson	Dakota	11318228	16	$25,000	Yes	Hampton Township - Continued Forest restoration.
McMenomy	Dakota	11519216	44	$126,000	Yes	City of Rosemount - Continued Forest restoration.
Melbo	Dakota	11319201	5	$10,000	Yes	Castle Rock Township - Continued Prairie and Forest restoration.
Miesville Ravine Park Reserve	Dakota	11317236	47	$180,000	Yes	Douglas Township - Continued Prairie and Forest restoration.
Pylkas	Dakota	02722220	3	$50,000	Yes	City of Inver Grove Heights - Continued Forest restoration.
Ruppe	Dakota	11220211	18	$20,000	Yes	Greenvale Township - Continued Prairie, Wetland restoration.
Spring Lake Park Reserve - Unit 16	Dakota	11518222	35	$63,000	Yes	City of Rosemount - Continued Habitat restoration.
Vermillion Confluence Park Conservation Area	Dakota	11420236	121	$275,000	Yes	City of Farmington - New Habitat restoration.
West Lebanon Hills	Dakota	11520214	171	$85,000	Yes	City of Eagan - Continued Forest restoration.
Wolfson	Dakota	11519216	6	$17,000	Yes	City of Rosemount - Continued Forest restoration.

Easement Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Bartness	Dakota	02722220	5	$110,000	No
Commons Land	Dakota	11219219	32	$200,000	No
Dudley - Phase One	Dakota	11219228	12	$100,000	No
Groethe	Dakota	02822217	1	$10,000	No
Poepl	Dakota	11418221	37	$160,000	No
Sauber	Dakota	11320205	18	$120,000	No

Parcel Map


Sherburne
Anoka
Chisago
Wright
Hennepin
Ramsey
Washington
Carver
Scott
Dakota
Le Sueur
Rice
Goodhue
Wabasha
Waseca
Steele
Dodge
Olmsted
0 3 6 9 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Dakota County Habitat Protection/Restoration Phase IX

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - Dakota County Habitat Protection/Restoration Phase IX
Organization: Dakota County
Manager: Alexander Scurto

Budget

Requested Amount: $4,942,400
Appropriated Amount: $2,282,000
Percentage: 46.17%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	-	$1,800,000	-	$840,000	-	46.67%
Contracts	$3,664,900	-	$1,582,000	-	43.17%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$1,277,500	-	$650,000	-	50.88%	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	$49,000	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	$1,000	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$4,942,400**	**$1,800,000**	**$2,282,000**	**$840,000**	**46.17%**	**46.67%**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
The scaling may not proportionately reduce acres and activities, as County staff can't anticipate what project applications will be received, and which ones will move forward to completion. If this proposal is scaled back, County staff can only estimate what the lower acreages and lesser activities might be.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
The scaling may not proportionately reduce personnel and DDS expenses, because with a voluntary program, County staff can't anticipate what project applications will be received, and which ones will move forward to completion. It's possible that many smaller projects could take the place of fewer larger projects.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
The scaling may not proportionately reduce acres and activities, as County staff can't anticipate what project applications will be received, and which ones will move forward to completion. If this proposal is scaled back, County staff can only estimate what the lower acreages and lesser activities might be.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
The scaling may not proportionately reduce personnel and DDS expenses, because with a voluntary program, County staff can't anticipate what project applications will be received, and which ones will move forward to completion. It's possible that many smaller projects could take the place of fewer larger projects.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	1,361	866	63.63%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	176	105	59.66%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	$3,664,900	$1,582,000	43.17%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$1,277,500	$700,000	54.79%
Enhance	-	-	-

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	1,361	866	63.63%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	176	105	59.66%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	$3,664,900	$1,582,000	43.17%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$1,277,500	$700,000	54.79%
Enhance	-	-	-

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes - ML2027

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/19/2026

Project Title: Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes - ML2027

Funds Recommended: $2,833,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Annie Knight
Title: Executive Director
Organization: Northern Waters Land Trust
Address: 800 Minnesota Ave W PO Box 124
City: Walker, MN 56484
Email: AnnieK@nwlt-mn.org
Office Number: 218-547-4510
Mobile Number:
Fax Number:
Website: www.northernwaterslandtrust.org

Location Information

County Location(s): Becker, Otter Tail, Aitkin, Cass, Hubbard, Itasca, Crow Wing and Beltrami.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Northern Forest

Activity types:

Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Habitat

Narrative

Abstract

Northern Waters Land Trust (NWLT) will permanently protect approximately 350 acres within priority coldwater lake watersheds in north-central Minnesota through fee-title acquisition and transfer to long-term public ownership. These lakes support sensitive coldwater fish species that depend on clean, cold, oxygen-rich water. Working with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and regional partners, NWLT will strategically protect forested shoreline and watershed parcels identified through science-based ecological analysis. By protecting these lands before they are fragmented or developed, the program will help sustain water quality, coldwater fisheries, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation opportunities for future generations.

Design and Scope of Work

Minnesota is famously known as the "Land of 10,000 Lakes," but some of its most distinctive bodies of water are its coldwater lakes. A foundation of Minnesota's angling and cultural heritage, these lakes support coldwater fish communities including lake trout, lake whitefish, burbot, and tullibee (cisco) - important forage fish for walleye, muskellunge, and other sport fisheries. Coldwater lakes are characterized by their ability to maintain cold, oxygen-rich water (oxythermal habitat) year-round.

Over the past 30 years, Minnesota DNR and University of Minnesota researchers have documented steep declines in coldwater fish populations. Cisco populations, important indicators of warming water temperatures, have nearly vanished from portions of their southern range and have disappeared from a substantial share of their native lakes in nearby states (Stanley, 2019). A growing body of research identifies climate change and watershed disturbance from land-use change as major drivers of oxythermal habitat loss. As air temperatures rise and watershed development increases, many coldwater lakes are losing the cold, oxygen-rich conditions necessary to sustain coldwater fisheries.

Reducing watershed disturbance through protection of forested land cover and native shoreland vegetation is critical to maintaining coldwater lake resilience under increasing temperatures and other ecological stressors. Earlier phases of the "Fisheries Habitat" program focused primarily on protecting high-quality tullibee refuge lakes, advancing watershed-scale conservation around some of Minnesota's most vulnerable coldwater fisheries.

Building on this foundation, updated DNR and Pollution Control Agency analyses now provide a more comprehensive framework for evaluating coldwater lake condition, classifying lakes into Tier 1–3 based on dissolved oxygen levels. This science-based approach maintains focus on protecting remaining refuge lakes while also identifying additional Tier 1 and Tier 2 lakes that still support viable coldwater fisheries but are increasingly vulnerable without proactive watershed protection. Tier 3 lakes, which no longer maintain suitable coldwater habitat conditions, demonstrate the long-term consequences of delayed protection and watershed disturbance. Protecting priority watersheds before further degradation occurs will help sustain resilient fisheries, protect water quality, and maintain ecological function.

In prioritizing watershed lands for protection, NWLT evaluates ecological value, watershed protection levels, parcel size, landscape context, development risk, partnership opportunities, and prior conservation investments. Parcels are further ranked using a scoring framework considering habitat quality, connectivity, disturbance, urgency, and cost. Priority parcels are mapped using the Clean Water Critical Habitat tool to support science-based decisions. NWLT has partnered closely with Minnesota Land Trust throughout previous program phases, strengthening regional coordination and impact.

Through this grant, NWLT will permanently protect approximately 350 acres through fee title acquisition within priority coldwater lake watersheds. Acquired lands will be conveyed to long-term public ownership for permanent management and public benefit. NWLT will conduct targeted landowner outreach and collaborate with partners including Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and county land departments. Projects will prioritize willing landowners and opportunities to leverage matching contributions and donated value. Protecting these lands helps prevent fragmentation and sustains water quality, fisheries habitat, wildlife corridors, and recreation opportunities across northern Minnesota.

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

Coldwater lakes support important fisheries for species such as tullibee (cisco), lake trout, lake whitefish, and burbot. These species require clean, cold, well-oxygenated water conditions typically found in deep lakes with healthy, intact watersheds. Tullibee are a critical forage fish supporting prized sport fisheries such as walleye, northern pike, and muskellunge, while lake trout and lake whitefish provide important recreational, cultural, and subsistence value, particularly for Tribal communities. Because coldwater fish species are highly sensitive to warming temperatures, declining oxygen levels, and watershed disturbance, they are important indicators of overall lake ecosystem health.

Climate change, shoreland development, and watershed disturbance pose increasing threats to Minnesota's coldwater fisheries and aquatic habitats. According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, rising air temperatures, increasing precipitation intensity, and changing runoff patterns are already affecting lake temperatures, water quality, and aquatic habitat conditions across the state. Lakes with intact forests, undeveloped shorelands, and protected watershed lands are more resilient to these pressures and provide critical refuge habitat for coldwater fish species as environmental conditions change.

MN DNR Fisheries research has shown that healthy forested watersheds are fundamental to sustaining high-quality fish habitat and aquatic ecosystem function. Shoreland disturbance and watershed development increase runoff, nutrient loading, erosion, and habitat fragmentation, reducing a lake's ability to support sport fish, forage fish, and other aquatic wildlife. By permanently protecting forested watershed and shoreline habitats, this program helps maintain water quality, sustain coldwater fisheries, protect connected wildlife habitat, and support long-term resilience for fish, game, and wildlife populations across northern Minnesota.

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

Now is a critical time to protect Minnesota's coldwater fisheries lakes. These rare and ecologically sensitive systems are under increasing threat from climate change, which is warming deepwater habitats and reducing oxygen levels essential for coldwater fish species. At the same time, shoreline development and land-use pressures continue to degrade water quality and fragment critical forested buffers. Protecting these lakes through strategic land acquisition offers a cost-effective, long-term solution to preserving water quality, sustaining recreational fisheries, and maintaining biodiversity. With public awareness growing and science-based conservation tools in place, this is a unique window of opportunity to secure irreplaceable aquatic habitats before further degradation occurs. Grant support will enable us to act quickly and collaboratively to protect these high-priority lakes for current and future generations.

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

This proposal protects shoreline and forest habitat within priority coldwater lake watersheds in north central Minnesota. Our land acquisition strategy prioritizes parcels adjacent to existing public lands and protected properties in order to expand contiguous habitat complexes and maintain intact, forested shorelines across the broader landscape. By protecting these lands before they are subdivided and developed, this work reduces habitat fragmentation, strengthens watershed resilience, and preserves the long-term ecological integrity of coldwater lake ecosystems.

Research by Timothy Cross and Peter Jacobson in "Landscape Factors Influencing Lake Phosphorus Concentrations Across Minnesota" demonstrates that coldwater fish communities are especially vulnerable to elevated phosphorus levels associated with watershed disturbance and development. As phosphorus increases, deep-water oxygen levels decline, negatively affecting species that depend on cold, oxygen-rich conditions for survival and reproduction. Their findings conclude that protecting intact watersheds before water quality degradation occurs is the most effective and cost-efficient conservation strategy.

Minnesota DNR Fisheries researchers have classified coldwater lakes statewide into Tiers 1-3 based on their coldwater fish habitat quality (TDO3). Our protection efforts are focused on the highest quality (Tier 1 and 2) coldwater lake watersheds, where additional land protection will have the greatest safeguarding effect. Building on this proactive protection framework, Jacobson and Duval, in "Protecting Watersheds of Minnesota Lakes with Private Forest Conservation Easements: A Suggested Strategy," emphasize that maintaining forest cover in lake watersheds is critical to sustaining water quality. While substantial portions of these watersheds are publicly owned, a significant share remains in private ownership and is increasingly being subdivided and developed. Modeling by the Minnesota DNR Fisheries Research Unit indicates that total phosphorus concentrations remain near natural background levels when approximately 75% of a watershed is protected and left undisturbed.

Since this program's inception, we have made meaningful progress toward achieving this 75% protection threshold on several priority lakes, effectively "moving the needle" on watershed-scale protection across the region. Continued support will allow us to build on this momentum, complete key habitat corridors, and further safeguard Minnesota's highest-quality coldwater lake systems.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management

Other : Regional One Watershed One Plans

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Northern Forest

Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *Shoreline habitat and forested parcels totaling 350acres will be permanently protected from development and fragmentation through fee title acquisitions. This outcome will be measured by the number of acres and shoreline miles permanently protected within priority coldwater watersheds, and by the extent to which projects expand connected habitat complexes and reduce fragmentation risk. Acquired lands will also be evaluated for their contribution to public access and recreational opportunities. Properties conveyed to government agencies will be managed according to established land management plans, ensuring long-term conservation goals are met and maintained.*

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

Funding procured by NWLT through this Outdoor Heritage Fund proposal will not supplant or substitute any previous funding from a non-Legacy fund used for the same purpose.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

NWLT is an accredited conservation organization that does not depend on Outdoor Heritage Funds to sustain or maintain our work. The majority of financial support for both NWLT must be raised on an annual basis. The work in this proposal allows NWLT to enhance and accelerate ongoing conservation efforts in North Central Minnesota. These grant funds will not substitute for or supplant other funding sources.

The fee-title acquisitions will be owned and managed by a governmental agency.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2031 and in perpetuity	Managing governmental agency	Ongoing management in line with developed management plans	-	-

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

NWLT deeply values inclusiveness, collaboration, teamwork and diversity in all of our programs, projects, and community work. We believe that enduring conservation success depends on the active involvement of people and partners whose lives and cultures are linked to the natural systems we seek to conserve. Currently, NWLT is directly including Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in these protection efforts by engaging in regular discussions, acknowledging which lands have cultural and ecological significance, and engaging in partnership on conservation projects where possible. NWLT is focused on building relationships based on trust, listening, and mutual respect. We will listen and seek out potential authentic partnerships that can advance our goals of conserving the best of Minnesota's remaining habitats while building relationships with and working collaboratively with diverse communities such as Tribal Nations, rural landowners, and multi-generational families. The Environmental Protection Agency has developed an environmental justice mapping and screening tool. This tool indicates several of the proposed parcels fall within areas identified as environmental justice areas of concern. Demographic indicators used are: percent low-income, percent people of color, less than high school education, linguistic isolation, age under 5 and over 64. Protecting these lands mitigates some of the environmental justice concerns for at-risk populations.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**
Yes

Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
No

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?
No

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion?
Yes

Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:
All fee title acquisitions will be open to hunting and fishing.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

State of MN

County

Local Unit of Government

Tribal

NGO

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

WMA

AMA

State Forest

County Forest

SNA

Tribal

What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
4-5 acquisitions.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?
No

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?
No

NWLT will not be completing restoration or enhancement work through this grant, however after land is acquired and conveyed to the MN DNR, they will execute initial restoration activities as outlined in the DNR IDP plan. We have allocated the appropriate funds for this in the DNR IDP budget line.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?
No

Explain how and when the restoration/enhancement work will be completed and identify the source of funding:
NWLT will not be completing restoration or enhancement work through this grant, however after land is acquired and conveyed to the MN DNR, they will execute initial restoration activities as outlined in the DNR IDP plan. We have allocated the appropriate funds for this in the DNR IDP budget line.

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Protection of 350 acres via fee acquisition; conveyance to a governmental agency.	June 2031
Landowner outreach for fee acquisition program.	Ongoing through June 2031

Date of Final Report Submission: 10/01/2031

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$170,000	-	-	$170,000
Contracts	$30,000	-	-	$30,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$2,290,000	$229,000	Landowners, Lake Associations	$2,519,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$4,000	-	-	$4,000
Professional Services	$160,000	-	-	$160,000
Direct Support Services	$46,000	-	-	$46,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$68,700	-	-	$68,700
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$2,300	-	-	$2,300
DNR IDP	$62,000	-	-	$62,000
Grand Total	**$2,833,000**	**$229,000**	**-**	**$3,062,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
NWLT Land Protection Staff	0.75	4.0	$170,000	-	-	$170,000

Amount of Request: $2,833,000
Amount of Leverage: $229,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 8.08%
DSS + Personnel: $216,000
As a % of the total request: 7.62%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
We received 33% of our requested appropriation. Acre outputs were reduced to 33% of what was proposed. Personnel was reduced to 43% of what was proposed. This is because the majority of staff time is tied to fixed administrative, coordination, and compliance tasks that remain constant regardless of projects completed.

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:
We will seek leverage in the form of donations via seller contributions to reduce the purchase price of acquisitions, as well as donations from lake associations within surrounding watersheds. These funds are not yet confirmed at this time.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This proposal is true to budget and protection goals and would be most effective if funded fully. If 50% funding was received, outputs would be reduced by approximately 50-65%.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS costs would be reduced, but less than proportionally to the reduction in acquisition funding. Certain costs, including landowner outreach, project development, grant administration, and due diligence, are necessary regardless of project size. Some projects also require substantial staff time before feasibility can be fully determined.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
Funds in the contract line are for outreach services (with appropriate approval) and for pre-conveyance site cleanup services, such as well sealing, building removal, and general contracting, etc.

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

Appraisals

Other : Environmental Assessments, Project Mapping.

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

Fee Acquisition

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?
We anticipate completing 4-5 fee title acquisitions with the proposed funds.

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
No

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:

Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?

In a process annually reviewed and approved by MNDNR Grants (most recently in August of 2025), NWLT determined our direct support services rate to include all allowable direct and necessary expenditures not captured in other line items in the budget. NWLT also provides MNDNR Grants with a copy of our financial audit as an additional validation as part of the request for DSS rate approval.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?

No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	350	350
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**350**	**350**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$2,833,000	$2,833,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$2,833,000**	**$2,833,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	350	350
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**350**	**350**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	$2,833,000	$2,833,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$2,833,000**	**$2,833,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$8,094
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	$8,094
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

.5

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
No

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
Northern Waters Land Trust (NWLT) uses a combination of objective criteria and professional judgment to identify, prioritize, and select parcels for protection. A criteria-based scoring system provides a standardized framework to compare projects using consistent data, allowing proposals to be evaluated relative to each other and to a baseline. Local knowledge, program goals, timing, funding availability, organizational capacity, and other qualitative considerations also inform final selections.

NWLT solicits project proposals through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, targeting landowners with properties on high-priority lakes. Each proposal is reviewed and scored by NWLT's Clean Water Technical Advisory Committee, which includes conservation professionals from the DNR, counties, SWCDs, and regional NGOs. This committee brings deep, place-based knowledge to the selection process and ensures alignment with local and regional conservation priorities.

The scoring framework evaluates three main categories:

1- Ecological Integrity – Measures the current condition of the site, including parcel size, habitat quality, and surrounding landscape context.

2- Threat/Urgency – Assesses the potential risk of development or degradation if the property is not protected.

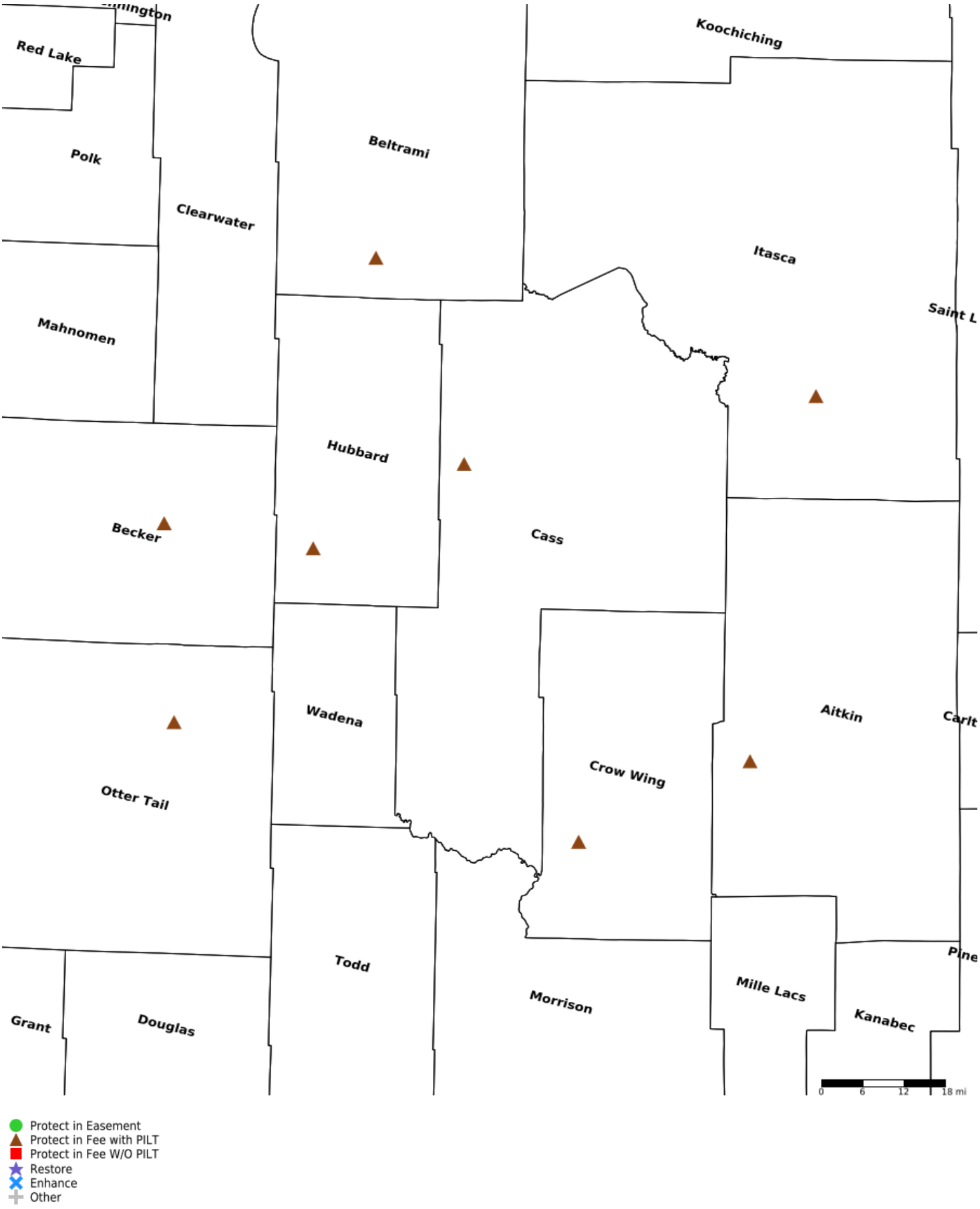
3- Cost/Value – Considers the overall conservation value relative to cost, including any donative value offered by the landowner.

By combining these factors, NWLT identifies parcels with the greatest potential for long-term ecological viability and public benefit. This process ensures that limited resources are directed toward the highest-impact conservation opportunities.

Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
Aitkin Area Coldwater Lakes	Aitkin	04727236	0	$0	No
Detroit Lakes Area Coldwater Lakes	Becker	14038208	0	$0	No
Bemidji Area Coldwater Lakes	Beltrami	14633204	0	$0	No
Walker Area Coldwater Lakes	Cass	14231227	0	$0	No
Brainerd Area Coldwater Lakes	Crow Wing	13328209	0	$0	No
Park Rapids Area Coldwater Lakes	Hubbard	14035225	0	$0	No
Grand Rapids Area Coldwater Lakes	Itasca	05525222	0	$0	No
Fergus Falls Area Coldwater Lakes	Otter Tail	13638227	0	$0	No

Parcel Map


Red Lake
Polk
Clearwater
Beltrami
Koochiching
Itasca
Saint L
Mahnomen
Hubbard
Becker
Cass
Wadena
Aitkin
Carlt
Otter Tail
Crow Wing
Todd
Morrison
Mille Lacs
Kanabec
Pine
Grant
Douglas
0
6
12
18 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes - ML2027

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - Fisheries Habitat Protection on Strategic North Central Minnesota Lakes - ML2027
Organization: Northern Waters Land Trust
Manager: Annie Knight

Budget

Requested Amount: $8,476,000
Appropriated Amount: $2,833,000
Percentage: 33.42%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$395,000	-	$170,000	-	43.04%	-
Contracts	$91,000	-	$30,000	-	32.97%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$7,000,000	$700,000	$2,290,000	$229,000	32.71%	32.71%
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	$15,200	-	$4,000	-	26.32%	-
Professional Services	$502,000	-	$160,000	-	31.87%	-
Direct Support Services	$106,600	-	$46,000	-	43.15%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$210,000	-	$68,700	-	32.71%	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$3,000	-	$2,300	-	76.67%	-
DNR IDP	$153,200	-	$62,000	-	40.47%	-
Grand Total	**$8,476,000**	**$700,000**	**$2,833,000**	**$229,000**	**33.42%**	**32.71%**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This proposal is true to budget and protection goals and would be most effective if funded fully. If 50% funding was received, outputs would be reduced by approximately 50-65%.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS costs would be reduced, but less than proportionally to the reduction in acquisition funding. Certain costs, including landowner outreach, project development, grant administration, and due diligence, are necessary regardless of project size. Some projects also require substantial staff time before feasibility can be fully determined.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This proposal is true to budget and protection goals and would be most effective if funded fully. If 30% funding was received, outputs would be reduced by 70-80%.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS costs would be reduced, but less than proportionally to the reduction in acquisition funding. Certain costs, including landowner outreach, project development, grant administration, and due diligence, are necessary regardless of project size. Some projects also require substantial staff time before feasibility can be fully determined.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	875	350	40.0%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	0	-	-
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$8,476,000	$2,833,000	33.42%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	875	350	40.0%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	0	-	-
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$8,476,000	$2,833,000	33.42%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Metro Big Rivers Phase 17

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/19/2026

Project Title: Metro Big Rivers Phase 17

Funds Recommended: $6,119,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Neal Feeken
Title: Executive Director
Organization: MN Valley Trust (Metro Big Rivers)
Address: 3815 East American Boulevard
City: Bloomington, MN 55425
Email: nfeeken@mnvalleytrust.org
Office Number: 952-207-0247
Mobile Number: 952-207-0247
Fax Number:
Website: www.mnvalleytrust.org

Partners Contact

FMR: Alex Roth - aroth@fmr.org - (651) 477-0928

MLT: Haley Golz - hgolz@mnland.org - (218) 221-7777

MVT: Neal Feeken - nfeeken@mnvalleytrust.org - 952-207-0247

TPL: DJ Forbes - dj.forbes@tpl.org - (651) 308-5531

Location Information

County Location(s): Washington, Sherburne, Isanti, Dakota, Carver, Scott, Hennepin, Chisago, Wright and Sibley.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Metro / Urban

Activity types:

Protect in Fee

Restore

Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Prairie

Forest

Habitat

Narrative

Abstract

Metro Big Rivers 17 will protect 340 acres in fee-title, restore 140 acres, and enhance 267 acres of priority habitat in the Big Rivers' corridors in the Metropolitan Urbanizing Area (747 acres total). MBR projects benefit game and non-game wildlife and Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), and provide increased public access and nature connections for Twin City metro residents. This program protects and enhances additional critical habitat for myriad songbirds during spring and fall migration periods. Restoration and enhancement projects will include public participation through volunteering, demonstrating engagement from local community members, and contributing significant in-kind contributions.

Design and Scope of Work

Metro Big Rivers 17 will protect, restore and enhance 747 acres of prioritized wildlife habitat in the Metropolitan Urban Area, with an emphasis on the Mississippi, Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers and their tributaries. Metro Big Rivers' work benefits wildlife, improves water quality and in-stream food availability, increases wildlife-based recreational opportunities, and connects metro residents with nature.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) will enhance 152 acres at 4 sites to increase native plant diversity, improve pollinator and wildlife habitat, bolster water quality, and improve public access to natural spaces. Projects include restoration and enhancement tasks like invasive woody plant removal, seeding and planting of native prairie and forest species, mowing, spot-spraying, and prescribed burning. 9 acres of enhancement will occur on remnant native prairie.

Minnesota Valley Trust (MVT) will, through fee title acquisition, protect 85 acres river frontage, floodplain forest, wetland and upland habitat to expand the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Prospective lands are prioritized by the USFWS and will be restored/enhanced, then open for wildlife-based recreation. MVT will enhance an additional 75 acres of prairie/oak savanna habitat on multiple sites across Refuge units.

Trust for Public Land (TPL) will permanently protect 255 acres of at-risk wildlife habitat through fee-title acquisition. Additionally, TPL will restore/enhance 125 acres of prairie and forest habitat on the recently protected Keystone Woods WMA in Washington County. Prospective acquisitions are prioritized in state, regional, and local natural resource plans. Once acquired, these lands will be conveyed and managed by public partners and open for wildlife-based recreation.

Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) will restore 55 acres of high-quality habitats across 2 sites. These two adjacent conservation easements contain 55 acres of ag fields that will be restored to highly diverse, pollinator friendly prairies. This work is directly adjacent to the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge and will bridge the gap between the refuge and nearby prairie restorations on other MLT easements, thereby creating corridors for movement and expanding this important habitat complex.

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

Metro Big Rivers projects protect and improve habitats needed by SGCN and other targeted species. Many of Minnesota's forest and grassland SGCNs are migratory. Improving habitat along and near the Mississippi Flyway (the three big rivers) provides great benefits to all wildlife species, especially during critical migration periods.

Friends of the Mississippi River will conduct habitat enhancement at four sites located along the Mississippi River, within the Important Bird Area. This corridor provides critical habitat for neotropical migrant birds and numerous SGCN. FMR has been tracking breeding bird species at these sites, recording 11 SGCNs. The sites are also vital for many other species, especially native pollinators, and provide connectivity to other natural areas. In addition, three sites are situated along the Vermillion River, a major tributary to the Mississippi, and an additional site is located adjacent to the Minnesota River, just outside of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Minnesota Valley Trust will acquire lands identified through the USFWS Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. This plan prioritizes lands for high biodiversity, connectivity, and ability to preserve habitat for SGCN.

Trust for Public Land will acquire land in fee that are identified and prioritized in state, regional, and local natural resource plans due to their high biodiversity significance, connectivity to existing public lands, and ability to preserve habitat for SGCN. Permanent protection from development, and subsequent habitat management increase breeding and migratory habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, neo-tropical migrants, and non-migratory resident species, protect the diversity of native ecosystems, and improve connectivity and resilience.

Minnesota Land Trust targets its restoration/enhancement work to build high-quality habitat complexes that support SGCN and T&E species in the Metro area. Permanently-protected privately-owned lands will be prioritized to build the size of and connections between existing protected lands, enhancing the ability of these species to persist over the long term. Restoration and enhancement of habitat is proposed for lands already protected through easement.

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

The three major rivers, which converge in the Metro Urbanizing Area (MUA), and identified in the LSOHC Ecological Section Vision and Priorities, are of significant importance to myriad migrating species and SGCN. Four intersecting issues create urgency for Metro Big Rivers Partnerships' work in the MUA -- 1) continued decline of many wildlife species, most notably birds and pollinators, 2) declining habitat these species need to rebound and thrive, 3) rising land values and development and 4) metro residents' need for access to nature nearby.

Protecting and enhancing habitat in the MUA is especially critical now, as land values and developments continue to rise, placing constant demand on lands throughout the area. MBR projects provide needed and significant wildlife habitat, improve connectivity and habitat values (especially for wildlife and SGCN) and increase much-

needed public access to wildlife-based outdoor opportunities throughout the MUA, including hunting, fishing and wildlife observation.

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

Protection partners prioritize work through science-based processes led by the public entities that will ultimately own interest in the properties (e.g., MN DNR, USFWS). Plans followed include Minnesota Biological Survey, Minnesota State Wildlife Action Plan, and the Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Actions are targeted toward building conservation corridors and priority habitat complexes. Restoration and enhancement partners use science-based criteria to prioritize activities. This includes consideration of the highest quality natural areas (as determined by MN Biological Survey), as well as prioritization of work within important ecological corridors identified by a coalition of conservation partners and based on rare species and sensitive landscape features. This prioritization ensures that projects reduce fragmentation and link natural areas within already-established corridors. All of the restoration and enhancement sites are located along or near the three big rivers and important tributaries - some of the most important ecological corridors for migrating and sedentary plant and animal life.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Metro / Urban

Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

Outcomes

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

A network of natural land and riparian habitats will connect corridors for wildlife and species in greatest conservation need ~ *Partners work together to identify priority lands using existing data and public plans, then coordinate protection, restoration and enhancement activities in those priority areas. Work builds upon prior phases and is intended to continue into the future for maximum impact. Mapping shows progress in connecting corridors. Species collections and counts measure impact of activities over time on wildlife and Species in Greatest Conservation Need.*

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

This request is not supplanting or substituting for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

All public partners have committed to maintaining restoration and enhancement habitat improvements.

All MBR restore/enhance partners will raise funds and work with partners to ensure the project benefits are maintained. FMR will continue hosting public and group volunteer events to maintain habitat investments.

Lands acquired in fee title by MVT for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge will be sustained and maintained over the long-term by the USFWS. Habitat restoration / enhancement will be completed by MVT prior to transfer to the USFWS.

MLT provides habitat management plans to landowners and helps them access resources and technical expertise to undertake restoration, enhancement and ongoing management.

Lands acquired in fee title by TPL will be conveyed to the DNR or local units of government for permanent stewardship. Estimated costs for initial restoration work are included in this proposal. TPL will work with DNR or LGUs to complete a restoration and management plan, and implementation of that plan will be conducted once land has been conveyed. These properties will be managed and maintained by the respective government entities according to OHF standards.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Post-Acquisition, Ongoing	MBR Organizations, Public Partners	Post acquired property	Develop & implement habitat restoration and enhancement plans	Transfer property to public partner, steward
Ongoing	MBR organizations, Local Partners, Private Landowners	Monitoring and assessment of restoration and enhancement projects	Target actions, engage local partners and landowners	Take restorative action to correct any damage

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

MBR partners have a shared objective of providing all metro residents with high-quality natural spaces nearby. We believe everyone should be able to easily connect with nature, enjoy high-quality wildlife habitat and engage in wildlife-dependent recreation, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. Our projects benefit a diversity of communities, from lower-income, densely populated neighborhoods to urbanizing suburban/rural areas. Examples of how MBR engages and benefits diverse communities include:

Friends of the Mississippi River actively engages residents in habitat work in their communities through targeted outreach for volunteer events. Their youth programming targets young people from diverse backgrounds for exploring environmental careers. FMR's Environmental Stewards Institute increases underrepresented youth participating in environmental career pathway programs; at least 65% of participants identify as black, indigenous, or a person of color.

Metro residents can step off the light rail and into the wildness on the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge to connect with nature and wildlife at no cost. The Refuge and Minnesota Valley Trust provide free busing for schools with a high percentage of low-income students and have a free lending program (e.g. snowshoes, fishing poles, field backpacks, binoculars). Their internship and apprenticeship program recruits a diversity of youth to explore the outdoors and conservation careers.

Through its partnership with the MN Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Trust for Public Land facilitates mentored hunting and angling opportunities for diverse communities on public lands and waters across

Minnesota, with a focus on ones protected by the OHF. Like mentee participants, the mentors come from historically marginalized communities with diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. We know that seeing diversity in outdoor spaces helps foster a sense of representation, belonging and inclusion.

Minnesota Land Trust's commitment includes numerous projects to protect camps. The recent protection of the Girl Scouts' Camp Elk River and past protection of Phyllis Wheatley Community Center's Camp Katherine Parsons enables the youth of Minnesota to create lifelong memories and connections to natural spaces by providing opportunities for the camps to expand their programming while also protecting high-quality habitat.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**
No

Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:
Local units of government will be notified of pending fee title acquisitions, as required by law.

Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?
Yes

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 or on lands to be acquired in this program?
Yes

Where does the activity take place?

SNA

Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

County/Municipal

WMA

Refuge Lands

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
No

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?
No

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion?
Yes

Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:
Lands acquired for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge will be open for public hunting and fishing according to the National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act. The lands will be opened through a public process prescribed by the Act. We anticipate hunting and fishing opportunities will be like those already established for lands previously acquired for the Refuge. For specific information, refer to the Refuge's website - https://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota-valley/visit-us/activities/hunting

Lands acquired by Trust for Public Land will be open for fishing and hunting.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

State of MN

Federal

Local Unit of Government

County

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

WMA

National Wildlife Refuge

SNA

State Forest

AMA

Other : County Conservation Area

What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?
No

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?
-

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?
Yes

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
MLT - Restore/Enhance 55 acres	June 2032
MVT - Enhance and restore 75 acres	June 2031
TPL - Restore and enhance 125 acres	June 2031
TPL - Protect 255 acres through fee title acquisition	June 2031
MVT - Protect 85 acres through fee title acquisition	June 2031
FMR - Enhance 152 acres	June 2032

Date of Final Report Submission: 10/01/2035

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$313,400	$45,000	-, members, donors	$358,400
Contracts	$1,281,800	$70,000	-, members, donors, MVT Private funds	$1,351,800
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$3,080,000	-	-	$3,080,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	$1,052,000	$150,000	MVT Private funds	$1,202,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$8,000	$2,000	-, Private	$10,000
Professional Services	$60,000	-	-	$60,000
Direct Support Services	$116,700	$99,200	cities, foundations, members, Private	$215,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$102,000	-	-	$102,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$500	-	-	$500
Supplies/Materials	$60,600	$1,000	cities, foundations, members	$61,600
DNR IDP	$44,000	-	-	$44,000
Grand Total	**$6,119,000**	**$367,200**	**-**	**$6,486,200**

Partner: FMR

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$63,400	$45,000	members, donors	$108,400
Contracts	$577,300	$20,000	members, donors	$597,300
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$6,000	-	-	$6,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$53,200	$53,200	cities, foundations, members	$106,400
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$60,100	$1,000	cities, foundations, members	$61,100
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$760,000**	**$119,200**	**-**	**$879,200**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
FMR Staff	0.1	5.0	$63,400	$45,000	members, donors	$108,400

Partner: MLT

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$65,000	-	-	$65,000
Contracts	$164,500	-	-	$164,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$2,000	-	-	$2,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$17,500	-	-	$17,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$500	-	-	$500
Supplies/Materials	$500	-	-	$500
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$250,000**	**-**	**-**	**$250,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Restoration Program Staff	0.12	5.0	$65,000	-	-	$65,000

Partner: MVT

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	-	-	-	-
Contracts	$240,000	$50,000	MVT Private funds	$290,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	$750,000	$150,000	MVT Private funds	$900,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	-	-	-	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$10,000	-	-	$10,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$1,000,000**	**$200,000**	**-**	**$1,200,000**

Partner: TPL

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$185,000	-	-	$185,000
Contracts	$300,000	-	-	$300,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$3,080,000	-	-	$3,080,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	$302,000	-	-	$302,000
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	$2,000	Private	$2,000
Professional Services	$60,000	-	-	$60,000
Direct Support Services	$46,000	$46,000	Private	$92,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$92,000	-	-	$92,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	$44,000	-	-	$44,000
Grand Total	**$4,109,000**	**$48,000**	**-**	**$4,157,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Protection and Legal	0.25	4.0	$185,000	-	-	$185,000

Amount of Request: $6,119,000
Amount of Leverage: $367,200
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 6.0%
DSS + Personnel: $430,100
As a % of the total request: 7.03%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
Metro Big Rivers reduced the number of projects it will complete and acres impacted to accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation.

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:
Leverage includes committed partner and other private funds (FMR, MVT, TPL), committed and anticipated city funds (FMR).

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A reduction in funding would reduce outputs (acres/activities). The reduction will not be exactly proportional, as partners have some fixed costs that do not change based on project size.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS expenses are scalable, but not proportionately, due to grant management, landowner outreach and other fixed costs. Some fee acquisitions fail to close, but still have costs.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
FMR, MVT, TPL, MLT - Restoration / enhancement contracts with service providers.

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

Appraisals

Design/Engineering

Other : Phase 1 Environmental Review

Surveys

Fee Acquisition

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?
3 to 5

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
Yes

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging
NA

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?

FMR – As of October 27, 2023, FMR's DSS rate has been approved by DNR staff. Our rate includes the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget. A portion not exceeding 50% of these costs are requested from the grant and the balance is contributed as leverage.
MLT - In a process approved by the DNR on March 17, 2017, MLT's DSS rate includes the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget. This is similar to the MLT's proposed federal indirect rate. MLT will apply this DNR-approved rate only to personnel expenses.
TPL - DSS rate is based upon our federal rate which has been approved by the DNR. 50% of these costs are requested from the grant, 50% is contributed as leverage.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?
Hand tools, saws, brush cutters, GPS devices, safety gear and other necessary equipment to complete restoration and enhancement activities.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?
No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	85	-	55	140
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	235	235
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	105	105
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	152	40	75	267
Total	**-**	**237**	**40**	**470**	**747**

How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie? (Table 1b)

Type	Native Prairie (acres)
Restore	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-
Protect in Easement	-
Enhance	9
Total	**9**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	$164,000	-	$250,000	$414,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$3,509,000	$3,509,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$1,060,000	$1,060,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	$760,000	$136,000	$240,000	$1,136,000
Total	**-**	**$924,000**	**$136,000**	**$5,059,000**	**$6,119,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	140	-	-	-	-	140
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	235	-	-	-	-	235
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	105	-	-	-	-	105
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	267	-	-	-	-	267
Total	**747**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**747**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	$414,000	-	-	-	-	$414,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$3,509,000	-	-	-	-	$3,509,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$1,060,000	-	-	-	-	$1,060,000
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	$1,136,000	-	-	-	-	$1,136,000
Total	**$6,119,000**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$6,119,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	$1,929	-	$4,545
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$14,931
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$10,095
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	$5,000	$3,400	$3,200

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	$2,957	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$14,931	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$10,095	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	$4,254	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

2

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
No

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
FMR works with their public partners and other interested stakeholders to identify priority projects and areas. Criteria includes ecological and habitat value and potential (biodiversity, size and location), congruence with existing plans and priority areas, adjacency and connectedness to other public and protected lands and complexes, willing and committed landowners and leveraged opportunities.

MVT seeks to acquire land within the boundaries established by the USFWS for the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in its Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Within those boundaries, parcels are prioritized based on adjacency or proximity to lands already publicly-protected, the opportunity to protect lands from development and restore habitat to meet ecological and public use objectives, and the feasibility of completing large blocks of protected and publicly-managed lands over time.

TPL works with its public partners (Minnesota DNR and local units of government) to identify priority opportunities that expand on and create new public conservation investments that protect high-quality wetland, woodland, prairie and riparian habitat.

MLT prioritizes parcels for restoration and enhancement that are of high ecological significance, adjacent or close to public conservation investments and owned by landowners committed to conservation.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
MVT - Rapids Lake Lundquist	Carver	11524236	50	$27,500	Yes	Oak savanna enhancement
MVT - Rapids Lake Unit #2	Carver	11524225	57	$25,000	Yes	Oak Savanna enhancement
MVT - Rapids Lake VC	Carver	11423206	1	$5,000	Yes	Oak savanna enhancement
MVT - San Francisco Belter Unit	Carver	11424225	10	$235,000	Yes	Oak Savanna enhancement
MVT -Perbix WPA	Carver	11526234	20	$25,000	Yes	Grassland enhancement
MVT -Tiger Lake WPA	Carver	11526215	50	$15,000	Yes	Grassland enhancement
MVT-Rapids Lake Unit North	Carver	11524225	90	$530,000	Yes	Oak Savanna enhancement
MLT - Kroon Lake (Fredell)	Chisago	03320210	4	$75,000	Yes	Wetland enhancements on 2 basins
FMR - Hastings River Flats	Dakota	11517221	22	$77,600	Yes	Enhance 22 acres of restored prairie through prescribed burns and seeding
FMR - Lake Rebecca Park	Dakota	11517221	23	$95,900	Yes	Enhance 23 acres of restored priarie through prescribed burns and seeding
MVT -Soberg WPA	Dakota	11421235	25	$5,000	Yes	Grassland enhancement
MVT - Long Meadow Lake	Hennepin	02723218	15	$50,000	Yes	Floodplain forest enhancement
MVT - Long Meadow Lake BLVC Unit	Hennepin	02723206	12	$250,000	Yes	Oak savanna enhancement
MVT - Upgrala Unit	Hennepin	11622233	72	$100,000	Yes	Grassland/Wetland enhancement

MVT - Wilkie Unit	Hennepin	11522201	16	$100,000	Yes	Oak Savanna restoration
FMR - Eagle Creek AMA	Scott	11521218	35	$386,500	Yes	Enhance 35 acres of prairie (9.5 native prairie) through woody removal, prescribed burns, and seeding
FMR - Houlton Conservation Area	Sherburne	03326233	83	$200,000	Yes	Enhance 72 acres of restored prairie through prescribed burns and native seeding
MLT - LongPond Elk Farm (Angstman 1) wetland	Sherburne	03526222	10	$25,000	Yes	Wetland enhancements on 2 basins
MLT - LongPond Elk Farm (Angstman 3) wetland	Sherburne	03526223	11	$10,000	Yes	Wetland enhancement on 1 basic
MLT - Sherburne Hardwoods (Anderson Stombaugh 2)	Sherburne	03428212	40	$120,000	Yes	Prairie restoration
MLT - Sherburne Hardwoods (Nystrom)	Sherburne	03428212	15	$45,000	Yes	Prairie restoration
MVT - Redhead WPA	Sibley	11426222	40	$25,000	Yes	Grassland/Wetland enhancement
TPL - Keystone Woods WMA	Washington	03120218	800	$1,500,000	Yes	Restore 600 acres of prairie, enhance 200 acres of forest

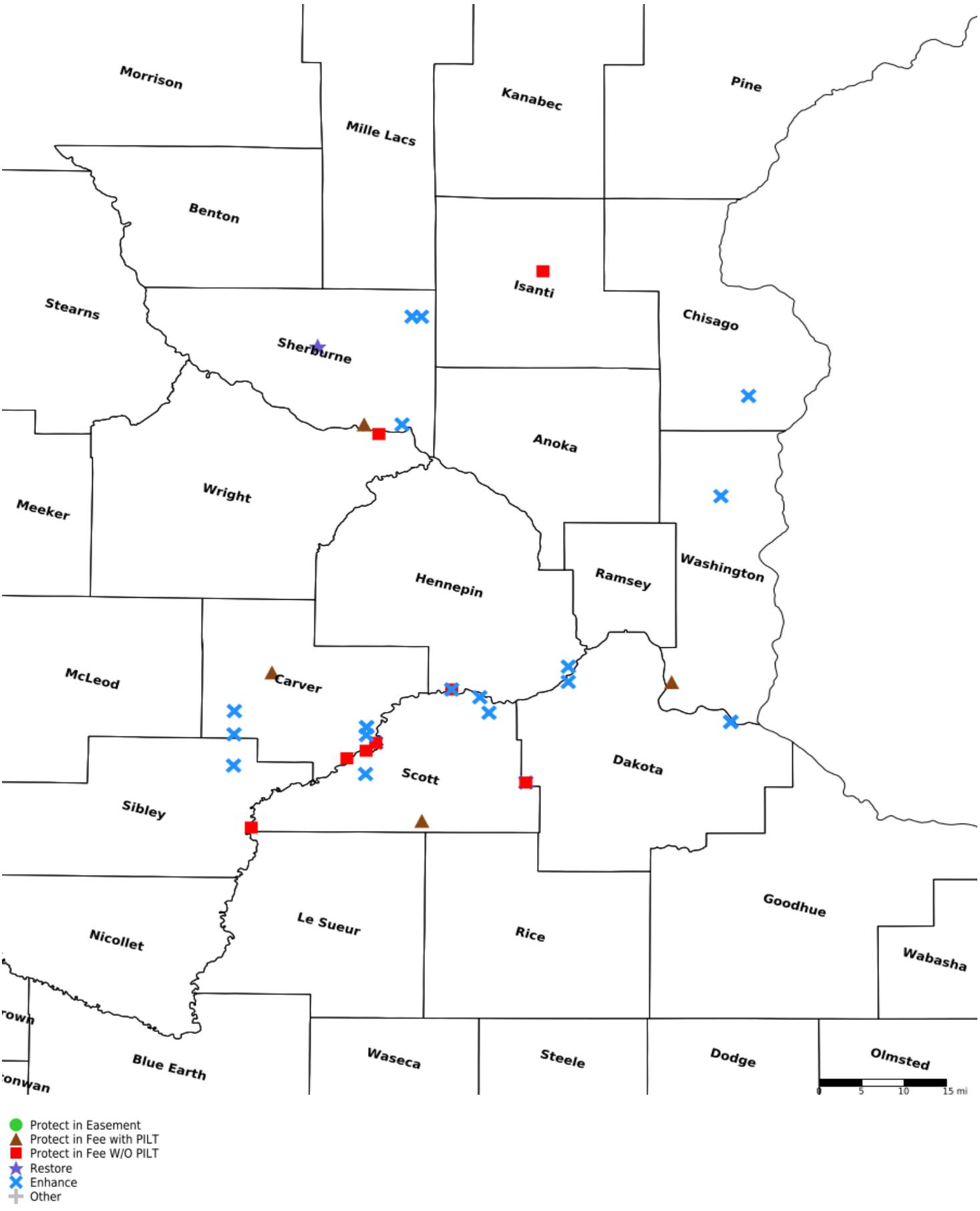
Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
MVT - Rapids Lake Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Carver	11423206	118	$826,000	No
MVT - San Francisco Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Carver	11424215	353	$1,147,250	No
MVT - San Francisco Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Carver	11424212	168	$546,000	No
MVT - Soberg WPA Addition,	Dakota	11421235	220	$2,400,000	No
MVT - Blakeley Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Scott	11326236	194	$630,500	No
TPL - Ney WMA Addition 3	Scott	11323225	193	$1,500,000	No
TPL - Mississippi Sherburne North	Sherburne	03327235	34	$1,200,000	No
TPL - Nesvig AMA	Washington	02722213	200	$5,000,000	No
TPL - Mississippi River Conservation Area	Wright	12123218	133	$3,500,000	No

Fee Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
TPL - Patterson Lake WMA addition	Carver	11625220	755	$9,800,000	No	3	$100,000
MVT - Upgrala Unit Addition, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge	Hennepin	11622233	116	$1,200,000	No	2	$0
TPL - Becklin Homestead Park	Isanti	03624224	57	$400,000	No	1	$50,000

Parcel Map


Morrison
Mille Lacs
Kanabec
Pine
Benton
Isanti
Stearns
Sherburne
Chisago
Anoka
Meeker
Wright
Hennepin
Ramsey
Washington
McLeod
Carver
Scott
Dakota
Sibley
Nicollet
Le Sueur
Rice
Goodhue
Wabasha
Blue Earth
Waseca
Steele
Dodge
Olmsted
0 5 10 15 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Metro Big Rivers Phase 17

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - Metro Big Rivers Phase 17
Organization: MN Valley Trust (Metro Big Rivers)
Manager: Neal Feeken

Budget

Requested Amount: $20,569,000
Appropriated Amount: $6,119,000
Percentage: 29.75%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$1,035,000	$62,500	$313,400	$45,000	30.28%	72.0%
Contracts	$3,394,000	$325,000	$1,281,800	$70,000	37.77%	21.54%
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$12,000,000	-	$3,080,000	-	25.67%	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	$3,200,000	$250,000	$1,052,000	$150,000	32.88%	60.0%
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	$18,000	$2,000	$8,000	$2,000	44.44%	100.0%
Professional Services	$111,000	-	$60,000	-	54.05%	-
Direct Support Services	$302,000	$583,900	$116,700	$99,200	38.64%	16.99%
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$251,000	-	$102,000	-	40.64%	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$1,000	-	$500	-	50.0%	-
Supplies/Materials	$99,000	$1,000	$60,600	$1,000	61.21%	100.0%
DNR IDP	$158,000	-	$44,000	-	27.85%	-
Grand Total	**$20,569,000**	**$1,224,400**	**$6,119,000**	**$367,200**	**29.75%**	**29.99%**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A reduction in funding would reduce outputs (acres/activities). The reduction will not be exactly proportional, as partners have some fixed costs that do not change based on project size.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS expenses are scalable, but not proportionately, due to grant management, landowner outreach and other fixed costs. Some fee acquisitions fail to close, but still have costs.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A reduction in funding would reduce outputs (acres/activities). The reduction will not be exactly proportional, as partners have some fixed costs that do not change based on project size.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS expenses are scalable, but not proportionately, due to grant management, landowner outreach and other fixed costs. Some fee acquisitions fail to close, but still have costs.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	140	140	100.0%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	830	235	28.31%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	270	105	38.89%
Protect in Easement	0	-	-
Enhance	724	267	36.88%

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	$564,000	$414,000	73.4%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$13,166,000	$3,509,000	26.65%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$3,346,000	$1,060,000	31.68%
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	$3,493,000	$1,136,000	32.52%

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	140	140	100.0%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	830	235	28.31%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	270	105	38.89%
Protect in Easement	0	-	-
Enhance	724	267	36.88%

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	$564,000	$414,000	73.4%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$13,166,000	$3,509,000	26.65%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	$3,346,000	$1,060,000	31.68%
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	$3,493,000	$1,136,000	32.52%

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Protecting Minnesota's Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance - Phase 6

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/19/2026

Project Title: Protecting Minnesota's Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance - Phase 6

Funds Recommended: $2,988,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Annie Knight
Title: Executive Director
Organization: Northern Waters Land Trust
Address: 800 Minnesota Ave W. PO Box 124
City: Walker, MN 56484
Email: AnnieK@nwlt-mn.org
Office Number: 218-547-4510
Mobile Number:
Fax Number:
Website: northernwaterslandtrust.org

Location Information

County Location(s): Cass and Crow Wing.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Northern Forest

Activity types:

Protect in Fee

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Habitat

Narrative

Abstract

Minnesota's Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance represent some of the state's highest quality aquatic ecosystems, supporting critical habitat for Species of Greatest Conservation Need. However, long-term integrity of these lakes depends not only on in-lake conditions, but on the health and resilience of their surrounding watersheds. Northern Waters Land Trust will protect 374 acres of priority habitat and 0.5 miles of shoreland through fee acquisition across northern Minnesota. By prioritizing intact landscapes and habitat connectivity, this project will enhance ecosystem resilience, safeguard water quality, and engage partners and communities in conserving some of Minnesota's most irreplaceable aquatic systems.

Design and Scope of Work

Northern Minnesota contains some of the most intact and biologically important freshwater ecosystems in the state. Its forested watersheds and lake systems support high levels of habitat connectivity and sustain robust populations of fish, wildlife and Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SCGN). However, these systems remain vulnerable to increasing development pressure, shoreline alteration, watershed disturbance, and climate change. Because these ecosystems remain largely intact, there is still significant opportunity, and urgency, to protect them before further degradation occurs.

Minnesota's Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance (LOBS) represent the highest quality examples of aquatic and shoreline habitat in the state. Classified based on exceptional conditions within aquatic plant, fish, bird, and/or amphibian communities, these lakes support high species richness, floristic quality, wild rice, exceptional sport fisheries, and colonial waterbird habitat. A significant concentration of LOBS occurs in northern Minnesota, where relatively intact landscapes continue to support these high-functioning systems.

Consistent with the Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan, this project applies a watershed-scale conservation approach, recognizing that lake condition is directly influenced by the surrounding landscape. Sensitive and specialized native species often decline as shorelines become fragmented or developed and are replaced by more disturbance-tolerant generalist species. Protecting forested lands within LOBS watersheds reduces fragmentation and development pressure while protecting water quality, shoreline habitat, forest cover, and wildlife corridors essential to fish, game, and wildlife species.

NWLT will permanently protect 374 acres of land through fee-title acquisition within priority LOBS watersheds. Lands acquired in fee will be conveyed to public entities for long-term management and stewardship. Lakes were prioritized based on Minnesota DNR benefit-cost analyses and alignment with County Water Plans and One Watershed One Plan priorities. Protection efforts will focus on forested uplands, shorelands, wetlands, and connected aquatic habitats that support fisheries, waterfowl, colonial nesting birds, amphibians, and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. To further refine our efforts, NWLT developed a GIS-based parcel prioritization model through the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership. This tool identifies properties that fill gaps in existing protected lands, contain high-quality habitat, and provide greatest conservation value. These results guide strategic landowner outreach and ensure that investments maximize ecological impact.

NWLT collaborates with lake associations, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Tribal partners, nongovernmental organizations, and the Minnesota DNR to identify and advance protection opportunities. A Technical Advisory Committee reviews acquisition proposals, while ongoing coordination with partners strengthens implementation and ensures alignment with local and regional priorities. Northern Waters Land Trust has partnered closely with co-grantee Minnesota Land Trust throughout this program's previous five phases,

strengthening regional coordination and conservation impact across LOBS watersheds.

Expected outcomes include improved habitat for fish, waterfowl, and Species of Greatest Conservation Need; sustained water quality in priority lakes; intact native shoreline vegetation; and expanded long-term protection of shoreland and forest habitats

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has classified high-quality "lakes of biological significance" into three categories (outstanding, high, and moderate) based on the presence of unique plant and animal communities. This program will preserve critical shoreland and forested uplands within the watersheds of lakes in the Outstanding classification category (LOBS). These landscapes support diverse fish and wildlife populations, including walleye, northern pike, golden-winged warbler, common loon, and many other species. Previous phases of this program have protected loon nesting habitat, wild rice beds, muskie spawning areas, and diverse native plant communities.

Beyond providing direct habitat benefits, protecting forested shorelands and watersheds is also essential for maintaining the high water quality conditions these species depend upon. A growing body of research demonstrates strong links between watershed land cover, water clarity, and the long-term viability of sensitive aquatic and shoreline species. For example, a recent study (Piper et al. 2024) identified declining water quality as a likely contributor to population declines in common loons. Water clarity is strongly influenced by surrounding land use, with lakes in more heavily forested watersheds generally exhibiting higher average Secchi depths than those surrounded by agricultural or urban development (Brezonik et al. 2007). These trends are expected to intensify as heavier summer rainfall events associated with climate change increase runoff into lakes. This proposal seeks to permanently protect forested lands that safeguard water quality and sustain resilient aquatic ecosystems.

Targeted LOBS within this proposal represent some of Minnesota's highest-quality aquatic and shoreland habitats. These lakes are characterized by exceptional game and nongame fisheries, high aquatic plant richness and floristic quality, and populations of endangered, threatened, or otherwise imperiled plant and lake bird species.

Numerous plans have identified the protection of these habitats as a conservation priority for Minnesota, including the Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan, DNR's Aquatic Management Area program, the State Conservation and Preservation Plan, Minnesota DNR's Strategic Conservation Agenda, and Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework. The central goal of this program is to protect high-quality habitat by securing permanent fee title acquisitions in strategic locations within watersheds of high biodiversity lakes.

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

Development and disturbance of Minnesota's remaining high-quality shoreland habitat continues to accelerate, particularly in north-central and northeastern regions where Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance are concentrated. Strong and sustained demand for lakeshore and rural properties, coupled with rising land values, is increasing the likelihood that large, intact parcels will be subdivided or developed. Once fragmented, these shoreland and watershed systems are extremely difficult and costly to restore.

This proposal focuses on protecting remaining high-priority parcels while they are still intact and available. NWLT has identified priority lakes and parcels, developed a GIS-based targeting framework, and established strong partnerships to act quickly as opportunities arise. Maintaining this momentum is critical to securing conservation outcomes.

Timely investment will ensure protection of these systems before irreversible changes occur and will maximize the impact of prior public investments in conservation across these watersheds.

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

By utilizing fee title acquisitions and transfer to public ownership to protect lands within watersheds of LOBS, this program expands habitat corridors, connects fragmented landscapes, and improves long term ecosystem resilience. Protecting forested shorelands, streams, wetlands, and adjacent upland habitat helps maintain water quality, sustain wildlife movement, and support healthy fish and wildlife populations across entire lake ecosystems.

This proposal prioritizes lakes through analysis of the DNR's Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance GIS layer for northeast and northcentral Minnesota. A parcel prioritization model we developed with a grant from the Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership and informed by collaboration with fisheries and habitat experts ranks properties by desired criteria. These include the Minnesota DNR's benefit-cost analysis framework, hydrologic connectivity, acreage, presence of SGCN, adjacency to existing protected lands, and others. This strategic approach ensures that we're targeting properties that are either expanding existing habitat complexes or possess a high conservation value through other factors, therefore ensuring that conservation investments will have the greatest long-term ecological return.

Recent research continues to demonstrate that intact, forested watersheds are critical to sustaining water quality, aquatic habitat, and resilient fish populations in northern Minnesota. Studies show that increasing watershed disturbance and shoreline development are strongly associated with declining lake health and habitat quality, reinforcing the importance of proactively protecting connected landscapes before fragmentation and degradation occur.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Long Range Plan for Fisheries Management

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Northern Forest

Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

Outcomes

Programs in the northern forest region:

Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *This outcome will be measured by the number of acres and shoreline feet permanently protected within priority Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance watersheds, and by the extent to which projects expand connected habitat complexes and reduce fragmentation risk. NWLT uses GIS analysis and conservation planning tools to evaluate adjacency to existing protected lands, watershed forest cover, and habitat connectivity. Success is further demonstrated through*

completion of fee title acquisitions, transfer of lands to long-term managing entities, and protection of priority habitats identified through Minnesota DNR and regional conservation planning efforts.

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

Funding procured by NWLT through this Outdoor Heritage Fund proposal will not supplant or substitute any previous funding from a non-Legacy fund used for the same purpose.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

Northern Waters Land Trust (NWLT) is an accredited land trust with a long history of successfully completing complex land protection projects throughout northern Minnesota. Accreditation through the Land Trust Alliance demonstrates NWLT's commitment to permanent land conservation, sound financial management, and long-term stewardship practices.

The long-term sustainability of this work is ensured through permanent fee title acquisitions that provide enduring protection for priority lands within Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance watersheds. Lands acquired in fee will be conveyed to long-term managing entities, including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, county land departments, Tribal governments, or federal partners, which have the capacity and authority to manage these lands in perpetuity for conservation, habitat protection, and public benefit.

This program also builds upon existing public conservation lands and prior Outdoor Heritage Fund investments, creating larger connected habitat complexes that are more resilient and cost-effective to manage over time. By strategically protecting lands adjacent to existing protected areas, the program strengthens long-term ecological function while reducing future fragmentation and development pressure.

NWLT maintains strong partnerships with local governments, lake associations, Tribal partners, and conservation organizations to support ongoing coordination, stewardship, and community support for protected lands.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2031 and in perpetuity	managing government agency	Ongoing management in line with developed management plans	-	-

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

NWLT deeply values inclusiveness, collaboration, teamwork and diversity in all of our programs, projects, and community work. We believe that enduring conservation success depends on the active involvement of people and partners whose lives and cultures are linked to the natural systems we seek to conserve. Currently, NWLT is directly including Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in these protection efforts by engaging in regular discussions, acknowledging which lands have cultural and ecological significance, and engaging in partnership on conservation projects where possible. NWLT is focused on building relationships based on trust, listening, and mutual respect. We will listen and seek out potential authentic partnerships that can advance our goals of conserving the best of Minnesota's remaining habitats while building relationships with and working collaboratively with diverse communities such as Tribal Nations, rural landowners, and multi-generational families. The Environmental Protection Agency has developed an environmental justice mapping and screening tool. This tool indicates several of the proposed parcels fall within areas identified as environmental justice areas of concern. Demographic

indicators used are: percent low-income, percent people of color, less than high school education, linguistic isolation, age under 5 and over 64. Protecting these lands mitigates some of the environmental justice concerns for at-risk populations.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**
Yes

Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
No

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?
No

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion?
Yes

Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:
The land will be transferred to a public entity and will be publicly accessible for hunting and fishing.

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

State of MN

County

Federal

Local Unit of Government

Tribal

NGO

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

WMA

SNA

AMA

State Forest

County Forest

Tribal

What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
We anticipate closing 5 acquisitions with this appropriation.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?
No

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?
No

NWLT will not be completing restoration or enhancement work through this grant, however after land is acquired and conveyed to the MN DNR, they will execute initial restoration activities as outlined in the DNR IDP plan. We have allocated the appropriate funds for this in the DNR IDP budget line.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?
No

Explain how and when the restoration/enhancement work will be completed and identify the source of funding:
NWLT will not be completing restoration or enhancement work through this grant, however after land is acquired and conveyed to the MN DNR, they will execute initial restoration activities as outlined in the DNR IDP plan. We have allocated the appropriate funds for this in the DNR IDP budget line.

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Protection of 374 acres via fee acquisition; conveyance to governmental agency.	June 2031
Landowner outreach for fee acquisition program	Ongoing through 2031

Date of Final Report Submission: 10/01/2031

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$170,000	-	-	$170,000
Contracts	$30,000	-	-	$30,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$2,430,000	$243,000	Landowners, Lake Associations	$2,673,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$4,000	-	-	$4,000
Professional Services	$170,000	-	-	$170,000
Direct Support Services	$43,000	-	-	$43,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$73,000	-	-	$73,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$2,500	-	-	$2,500
DNR IDP	$65,500	-	-	$65,500
Grand Total	**$2,988,000**	**$243,000**	**-**	**$3,231,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
NWLT Land Protection Staff	0.75	4.0	$170,000	-	-	$170,000

Amount of Request: $2,988,000
Amount of Leverage: $243,000
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 8.13%
DSS + Personnel: $213,000
As a % of the total request: 7.13%
Easement Stewardship: -
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: -

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
We received 41% of our requested appropriation. Acquisition dollars were reduced to 41% of what was proposed. Personnel was reduced to 48% of what was proposed. This is because the majority of staff time is tied to fixed administrative, coordination, and compliance tasks that remain constant regardless of projects completed.

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:
NWLT leverages multiple funding sources to support acquisitions, including landowner donations, lake association contributions, private philanthropy, and individual donors. We anticipate $243,000 of leverage; not confirmed. Any expenses not covered by this grant will be funded through general operating income.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This proposal is true to budget and protection goals and would be most effective if funded fully. If 50% funding was received, outputs would be reduced by approximately 50-65%.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS costs would be reduced, but less than proportionally to the reduction in acquisition funding. Certain costs, including landowner outreach, project development, grant administration, and due diligence, are necessary regardless of project size. Some projects also require substantial staff time before feasibility can be fully determined.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
Funds in the contract line are for outreach services (with appropriate approval) and for pre-conveyance site cleanup services, such as well sealing, building removal, and general contracting, etc.

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

Appraisals

Other : Environmental assessments, project mapping

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

Fee Acquisition

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?
We anticipate completing 5 acquisitions with the proposed funds.

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
No

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:

Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?

In a process annually reviewed and approved by MNDNR Grants (most recently in August of 2025), NWLT determined our direct support services rate to include all allowable direct and necessary expenditures not captured in other line items in the budget. NWLT also provides MNDNR Grants with a copy of our financial audit as an additional validation as part of the request for DSS rate approval.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?

No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	374	374
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**374**	**374**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$2,988,000	$2,988,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$2,988,000**	**$2,988,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	374	374
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**374**	**374**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	$2,988,000	$2,988,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**$2,988,000**	**$2,988,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$7,989
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	$7,989
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

.5

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
No

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
Parcels are identified and prioritized through a science-based ranking framework designed to evaluate their conservation value for protecting forested lake watersheds, sensitive shorelines, and connected habitat complexes. The system emphasizes maintaining intact forest cover, protecting sensitive shorelines, and reducing habitat fragmentation and watershed degradation.

Initial parcel identification is guided by geographic analysis of priority LOBS lake watersheds. Parcels are screened using ecological and landscape criteria including adjacency to protected lands, shoreline characteristics, hydrologic connectivity, land cover diversity, documented rare features, Minnesota Biological Survey biodiversity rankings, and risk of conversion to urban or agricultural land uses.

For fee-title acquisitions, the framework places strong emphasis on adjacency to existing protected lands in order to expand contiguous habitat complexes, maintain intact forested shorelines, and improve long-term management efficiency. Additional priority factors include presence of LOBS shoreline, proximity to riparian areas, location within sensitive shoreland zones, hydrologic connectivity, and documented rare species or habitats.

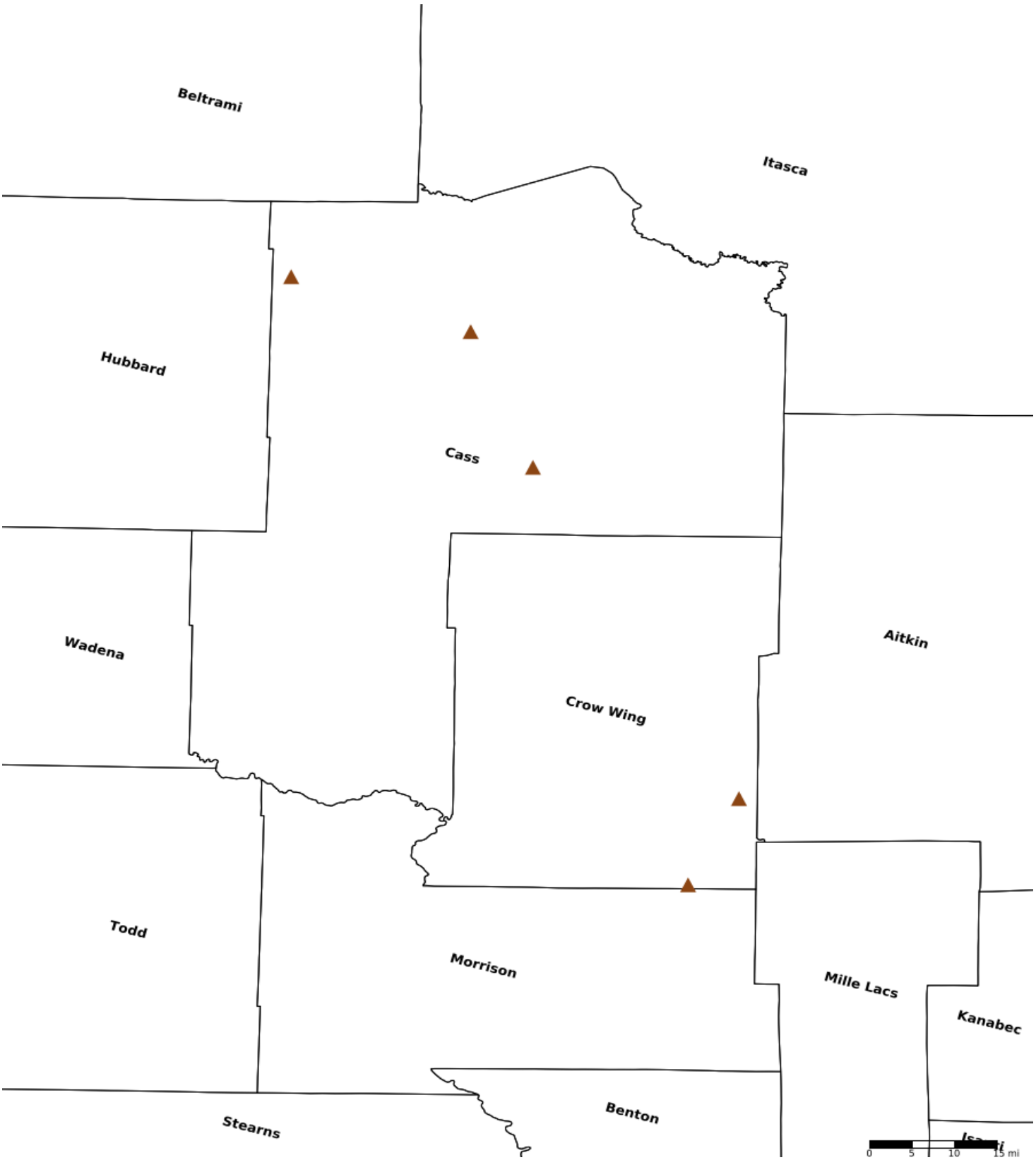
The ranking process uses a benefit index that combines parcel adjacency with ecological priority factors. Final rankings also consider project cost through a benefit-cost ratio analysis to maximize conservation return on investment and ensure strategic use of Outdoor Heritage Funds.

Parcels included in the proposal represent high-priority properties where landowners have expressed interest or engaged in direct discussions with project staff. Ongoing outreach within priority watersheds will continue throughout the grant period to expand the pipeline of willing participants and future conservation opportunities.

Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
NWLT - Leech Lake	Cass	14329226	38	$0	No
NWLT - Steamboat Lake	Cass	14431220	23	$550,000	No
NWLT - Wabedo Lake	Cass	14028222	33	$351,900	No
NWLT - Platte Lake	Crow Wing	04328231	44	$643,900	No
NWLT - Round Rice Mille Lacs	Crow Wing	04428202	220	$416,000	No

Parcel Map



- Protect in Easement
- Protect in Fee with PILT
- Protect in Fee W/O PILT
- Restore
- Enhance
- Other

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Protecting Minnesota's Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance - Phase 6

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - Protecting Minnesota's Lakes of Outstanding Biological Significance - Phase 6
Organization: Northern Waters Land Trust
Manager: Annie Knight

Budget

Requested Amount: $7,330,000
Appropriated Amount: $2,988,000
Percentage: 40.76%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$355,000	-	$170,000	-	47.89%	-
Contracts	$60,000	-	$30,000	-	50.0%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$6,000,000	$600,000	$2,430,000	$243,000	40.5%	40.5%
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-	-	-
Travel	$13,000	-	$4,000	-	30.77%	-
Professional Services	$492,000	-	$170,000	-	34.55%	-
Direct Support Services	$95,700	-	$43,000	-	44.93%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$180,000	-	$73,000	-	40.56%	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$3,000	-	$2,500	-	83.33%	-
DNR IDP	$131,300	-	$65,500	-	49.89%	-
Grand Total	**$7,330,000**	**$600,000**	**$2,988,000**	**$243,000**	**40.76%**	**40.5%**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This proposal is true to budget and protection goals and would be most effective if funded fully. If 50% funding was received, outputs would be reduced by approximately 50-65%.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS costs would be reduced, but less than proportionally to the reduction in acquisition funding. Certain costs, including landowner outreach, project development, grant administration, and due diligence, are necessary regardless of project size. Some projects also require substantial staff time before feasibility can be fully determined.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
This proposal is true to budget and protection goals and would be most effective if funded fully. If 30% funding was received, outputs would be reduced by approximately 70-80%.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Personnel and DSS costs would be reduced, but less than proportionally to the reduction in acquisition funding. Certain costs, including landowner outreach, project development, grant administration, and due diligence, are necessary regardless of project size. Some projects also require substantial staff time before feasibility can be fully determined.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	750	374	49.87%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	0	-	-
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$7,330,000	$2,988,000	40.76%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	750	374	49.87%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	0	-	-
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$7,330,000	$2,988,000	40.76%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-
Enhance	-	-	-

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

RIM Priority Habitat

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/12/2026

Project Title: RIM Priority Habitat

Funds Recommended: $1,958,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Kevin Roth
Title: Easement Programs Coordinator
Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources
Address: 110 2nd St. S. Suite 307
City: Waite Park, MN 56387
Email: kevin.roth@state.mn.us
Office Number:
Mobile Number: 651-539-2521
Fax Number:
Website: https://bwsr.state.mn.us/

Location Information

County Location(s):

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Forest / Prairie Transition

Northern Forest

Southeast Forest

Prairie

Metro / Urban

Activity types:

Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Forest

Prairie

Habitat

Wetlands

Narrative

Abstract

BWSR's RIM Priority Habitat Easement Program will protect and restore 165 acres through three easements targeting habitat blocks adjacent to or near permanently protected public lands. The program combines Outdoor Heritage Fund habitat priorities with locally identified conservation priorities to strategically secure easements in areas with the greatest potential for positive habitat impacts. By integrating science-based planning together with local knowledge, the program advances the protection and restoration of priority habitats across all regions of Minnesota.

Design and Scope of Work

This BWSR RIM easement program prioritizes habitat protection and restoration across Minnesota, addressing priority habitat types not fully served through other BWSR RIM programs. The program fills important conservation gaps by protecting and restoring tallgrass prairies, oak savannas, blufflands, cold-water trout streams, re-meandered streams, wetlands, riparian corridors, central hardwood forests, and boreal forests.

The program integrates statewide habitat priorities with locally developed conservation plans to identify the highest-value habitats and habitat corridors for permanent protection. While statewide habitat plans effectively establish broad regional conservation goals, local Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMPs) provide finer-scale prioritization based on local input and modeling tools. Developed at the HUC-8 watershed scale, CWMPs identify priority habitat areas, water quality goals, and locally important habitat corridors that may not be fully captured in statewide plans. These local plans are updated more frequently and reflect the most up-to-date priority areas across the state.

Program scoring and ranking prioritizes easement locations that expand or connect existing habitat corridors and complexes, particularly those adjacent to permanently protected lands, including lands open to public recreation. This approach maximizes landscape connectivity, strengthens wildlife populations, and increases the long-term ecological value of protected lands. Projects that contribute to or create larger permanently protected habitat complexes receive additional priority.

All easement lands are evaluated for restoration potential to ensure each acre provides high-quality habitat benefits. Restoration activities will be tailored to site conditions and habitat goals, and all easements will include long-term management plans to maintain habitat quality in perpetuity.
The RIM easement program is administered by BWSR and implemented through local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), ensuring local expertise guides project development and landowner engagement. SWCDs

submit landowner applications to BWSR, where projects are reviewed, ranked, and selected for funding. Permanent easements are secured prior to restoration or enhancement activities.

Through this program, 165 acres will be permanently protected and restored through three easements across Minnesota.

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

This proposal supports the protection, restoration, and enhancement of habitat for fish, game, wildlife, and threatened or endangered species through targeted, science-based habitat conservation strategies. By integrating statewide habitat priorities with locally developed conservation plans, the RIM Priority Habitat program focuses on protecting and restoring tallgrass prairies, oak savannas, blufflands, cold-water trout streams, re-meandered streams, wetlands, riparian corridors, central hardwood forests, and boreal forests.

This program expands habitat connectivity, strengthens ecological corridors, and increases opportunities for public recreation. Each easement is evaluated for restoration and vegetation enhancement potential, and restoration practices are implemented whenever feasible to maximize habitat quality and wildlife carrying capacity on protected acres.

Grassland restoration benefits more than 150 Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), including greater prairie-chicken, eastern and western meadowlark, grasshopper sparrow, chestnut-collared longspur, bobolink, Wilson's phalarope, sedge wren, plains hog-nosed snake, American badger, prairie vole, plains pocket mouse, eastern spotted skunk, monarch butterfly, and regal fritillary. These species depend on healthy grassland systems for breeding, migration, and foraging habitat.

Forest-prairie transition and prairie regions: the proposal addresses habitat fragmentation, land conversion, and climate-related impacts affecting migratory birds, gray wolves, and northern long-eared bats by improving habitat quality and connectivity in priority landscapes. In Southeast Minnesota's blufflands, which contain some of the state's highest concentrations of SGCN diversity, the project will protect and enhance critical habitat resources that support these populations.

Northern forest regions: protection of cold-water aquatic habitats that support species such as cisco and lake trout, which are increasingly vulnerable to land conversion and climate impacts. The project also benefits cool-water fisheries, including walleye and northern pike, which face increasing competition from warm-water species. Protection and restoration of riparian corridors and sensitive shorelines will improve habitat for common loon, bald eagle, gray wolf, and more than 55 SGCN, including red-shouldered hawk, northern goshawk, black-throated blue warbler, wood turtle, and four-toed salamander.

Where overlap exists with other BWSR-held easement programs, this program serves a complementary role. The intent of the RIM Priority Habitat program is to target high-priority habitat types and conservation opportunities not already addressed through existing BWSR programs.

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

Land values have plateaued across the state meaning demand for easements on private land is at its peak. Right now, we have a window of opportunity to secure easements on large tracts of land evidenced by easement applications and funded RIM easements over the past 2 years.

Funding from ML25 and for ML26 has been committed to new easements within the first month of funds becoming available. It is critical we are funding private land conservation easements right now. The next time land values increase, demand for easements will decrease. Funding for ML27 is critical to secure large, high quality easements.

Additionally, over 178,603 acres of CRP contracts in Minnesota will expire in federal fiscal years 2026–2027, increasing habitat fragmentation due to farming pressures and lack of CRP acres available nationwide. Private land easements are a great option for landowners to permanently protect habitat.

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

RIM Priority Habitat prioritizes habitat corridors and combats fragmentation, guided by scoring and ranking criteria. It accounts for both locally identified priority areas and statewide goals, expanding opportunities to protect and restore habitat corridors and complexes statewide. Larger blocks of habitat and expansion of existing habitat corridors are priorities for ranking easements.

Additionally, easements near permanently protected habitats, public hunting lands, and areas with Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), endangered, or threatened species are prioritized.

Maximizing vegetative diversity on these easements increases the number of species the easement will host.

Measurable metrics track progress. In the forested region, for instance, keeping land disturbance below 25% supports high water quality and habitat integrity. Once protection of this level has been achieved, local priorities move to new areas. In the prairie and transition ecoregions of the state, habitat complex size is used to determine when we have reached a point of diminishing returns.

The BWSR scoring system prioritizes projects that strengthen habitat corridors, form complexes, and reduce fragmentation.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Other : Locally developed comprehensive watershed management plans (CWMPs)

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Forest / Prairie Transition

Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

Metro / Urban

Protect habitat corridors, with emphasis on the Minnesota, Mississippi, and St. Croix rivers (bluff to floodplain)

Northern Forest

Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

Prairie

Protect, enhance, or restore existing wetland/upland complexes, or convert agricultural lands to new wetland/upland habitat complexes

Southeast Forest

Protect, enhance, and restore habitat for fish, game, and nongame wildlife in rivers, cold-water streams, and associated upland habitat

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Wetland and upland complexes will consist of native prairies, restored prairies, quality grasslands, and restored shallow lakes and wetlands ~ *A summary of wetland acres and associated native grasslands acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure outcomes are maintained. An increase of wetland and associated grassland habitat are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland and grassland dependent wildlife. This has a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as complexes are restored.*

Programs in metropolitan urbanizing region:

Core areas protected with highly biologically diverse wetlands and plant communities, including native prairie, Big Woods, and oak savanna ~ *A summary of wetland acres and associated native grasslands acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure outcomes are maintained. An increase of wetland and associated grassland habitat are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland and grassland dependent wildlife. This has a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as complexes are restored.*

Programs in the northern forest region:

Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species. A summary of the total number of forest land secured under easement through this appropriation will be reported. We expect sustained populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these easements are secured. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes.*

Programs in prairie region:

Restored and enhanced upland habitats ~ *A summary of upland acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure outcomes are maintained. An increase of wetland and associated grassland habitat are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland and grassland dependent wildlife. This has a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as complexes are restored.*

Programs in southeast forest region:

Stream to bluff habitat restoration and enhancement will keep water on the land to slow runoff and degradation of aquatic habitat ~ *A summary of forest acres acquired through this appropriation will be reported. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure outcomes are maintained. An increase of wetland and associated grassland habitat are expected to increase the carrying capacity of wetland and grassland dependent wildlife. This has a positive impact on both game and non-game species. We expect more abundant populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as complexes are restored.*

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

This funding request is not supplanting existing funding or a substitution for any previous funding.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement of RIM easements. BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry out oversight, monitoring and inspection of conservation easements. Easements are inspected every year for the first five years beginning the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs document findings and report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations are identified.
Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are $10,000 per easement. This value is based on using SWCD staff for monitoring and preliminary enforcement. The amount includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time as well as costs for encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations and legal enforcement.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2027-ongoing	Landowner Responsibility or Limited Enhancement Funding	Maintain compliance with easements.	Manage habitats for diverse habitat benefits.	-
2027-ongoing	Stewardship Account	Inspections every year for the first five years; then every third year.	Corrective actions of any violations.	Enforcement action taken by MN Attorney General's office.

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

Generally, RIM priority areas are focused on rural communities across the state due to the nature of the program and payment rates. Review of the Environmental Justice map produced by the MPCA shows RIM easement programs overlap with many identified environmental justice areas across the state, particularly those areas that are identified by lower than state median incomes. Lower annual income areas of the state benefit from RIM in several ways, including financial benefits for landowners through easement payments. The individual program may also require seeding and wetland restoration work by local contractors. The work by SWCD staff also includes outreach, monitoring and maintenance which helps maintain and grow rural jobs and economies.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Who will manage the easement?
SWCD, Landowner, BWSR

Who will be the easement holder?
BWSR

What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
3

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
Yes

> **Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:**
> In certain circumstances, wildlife food plots are an allowable use on RIM easements as part of an approved Conservation Plan. Annual or perennial food plots may be allowed at the owner's expense. Food plots must be maintained annually. If a food plot is discontinued, it must be immediately replanted to appropriate high-quality, permanent native vegetative cover and the associated establishment cost is the responsibility of the landowner(s). Food plot size and the number of food plots allowed are based on the size of the easement. Food plots will not exceed more than 10% of the easement area or will not exceed a maximum acreage depending on the size of the easement.

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Will the eased land be open for public use?
Yes

> **Describe the expected public use:**
> RIM easements do not require that private land is open to the public; however, this question is also evaluated on public benefit and RIM easements do provide a significant public benefit; often expand wildlife habitat near public lands. Many of these easements will be taken where there already is a large percentage of public land. Strategically placed easements improve habitat for wildlife that use wild rice water bodies in addition to improving terrestrial habitats located adjacent to these water bodies.
>
> RIM easement land remains in private ownership and the landowner still pays property taxes. Statutory

goals of the Outdoor Heritage Fund for protection and restoration of habitat. Minnesota Statute 97A.056 states ". . .the fund must be expended to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife." and "The council shall make recommendations . . . that directly relate to the restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, and that prevent forest fragmentation, encourage forest consolidation, and expand restored native prairie."

Criteria in all RIM program scoresheets used to evaluate and prioritize parcels funded include proximity of the easement land to lands that are in public ownership and/or open to public hunting. Parcels adjacent to public land or that would connect or expand larger existing habitat areas receive additional points in the scoring and ranking process. Wildlife typically travel far enough distances where a mixture of habitat on public and private land is necessary in order to maximize wildlife carrying capacity in that area. Private lands provide refuge in heavily pressured hunting areas as well.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?

Yes

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:

Though uncommon, new trails may be developed if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (fire breaks, berm maintenance, forest stewardship) and are noted on the conservation plan. Narrow mowed trails for personal use are allowed for landowner access on RIM easements. Unauthorized trails are a violation of the easement.

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?

Under the terms of the easement, a conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement and the conservation plan. BWSR, in cooperation with SWCDs, implements a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms and the conservation plan.

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?

Yes

Each parcel will be evaluated for restoration and/or enhancement potential. Opportunities to improve habitat quality will be pursued.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?

Yes

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Restorations complete	June 30, 2035
Easements recorded	June 30, 2031

Date of Final Report Submission: 09/30/2031

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation

(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other

institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$106,700	-	-	$106,700
Contracts	$9,400	-	-	$9,400
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$1,769,100	-	-	$1,769,100
Easement Stewardship	$30,000	-	-	$30,000
Travel	$3,400	-	-	$3,400
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$33,000	-	-	$33,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$4,900	-	-	$4,900
Supplies/Materials	$1,500	-	-	$1,500
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$1,958,000**	**-**	**-**	**$1,958,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Engineering	0.03	4.0	$17,200	-	-	$17,200
Easements	0.16	4.0	$89,500	-	-	$89,500

Amount of Request: $1,958,000
Amount of Leverage: -
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%
DSS + Personnel: $139,700
As a % of the total request: 7.13%
Easement Stewardship: $30,000
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 1.7%

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
Proportional reductions have been made to the budget and acres.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
The contracts line is used for payments to SWCD staff for easement acquisition and technical assistance, as appropriate. Estimated restoration costs are included in the easement acquisition line.

Easement Stewardship

What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?
3 easements at $10,000 per easement. The total stewardship amount will ultimately be dependent on the cost of easements and if the proposed easement number is reached. Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are $10,000 per easement. This value is based on using SWCD staff for monitoring and preliminary enforcement. The amount includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time as well as costs for encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations and legal enforcement.

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
No

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging
The travel line will only be used for traditional travel costs.

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?
BWSR annually reviews and updates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done and the program staff time involved.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?
Steel posts and signs to mark easement boundaries.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?
No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	20	90	40	15	165
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**20**	**90**	**40**	**15**	**165**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$200,000	$1,378,000	$190,000	$190,000	$1,958,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$200,000**	**$1,378,000**	**$190,000**	**$190,000**	**$1,958,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	10	30	20	80	25	165
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**10**	**30**	**20**	**80**	**25**	**165**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$40,000	$400,000	$195,000	$1,200,000	$123,000	$1,958,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$40,000**	**$400,000**	**$195,000**	**$1,200,000**	**$123,000**	**$1,958,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$10,000	$15,311	$4,750	$12,666
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$4,000	$13,333	$9,750	$15,000	$4,920
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

2,000

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
Yes - Sign up criteria is attached

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
Local partnerships set priorities by looking at multiple information sources and local values. Commonly used data include water quality trends, biological indicators (fish, plants, aquatic species), land disturbance and associated pollution loading, habitat quality including MN County Biological survey, current land ownership status, stream stability, forest health, future risk of land conversion, demographics, recreational value, and more. Targeting is selecting conservation projects, practices, or programs that address the priority issue and and specific placement on the landscape.

Partnerships set measurable goals to gauge their pace of progress. For example, they can easily measure progress toward their forest protection goals with the land disturbance indicator. Once they have reached the goal for a subwatershed, they can move on to the next. Another example is each watershed plan is required to have a quantifiable water storage goal, which can be met with wetland restoration and protection. Other indicators in watershed plans include water quality, miles of shoreline protection, index of biological integrity, and metrics for stream stability and connectivity. These will be addressed through CWF-supported projects along with permanent protection.

BWSR will established and will continue to adjust a scoring and ranking system to evaluate easement requests from partnerships with approved watershed plans. The scoring and ranking approach will incorporate plan priorities, the degree to which projects are paired with CWF dollars, and progress toward measurable goals set by local partnerships. Additional criteria will be set based on statewide datasets and priorities to maximize habitat befits for game, fish and wildlife.

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

RIM Priority Habitat

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - RIM Priority Habitat
Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources
Manager: Kevin Roth

Budget

Requested Amount: $5,000,000
Appropriated Amount: $1,958,000
Percentage: 39.16%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$274,100	-	$106,700	-	38.93%	-
Contracts	$21,900	-	$9,400	-	42.92%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$4,526,400	-	$1,769,100	-	39.08%	-
Easement Stewardship	$70,000	-	$30,000	-	42.86%	-
Travel	$8,800	-	$3,400	-	38.64%	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$82,500	-	$33,000	-	40.0%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$12,500	-	$4,900	-	39.2%	-
Supplies/Materials	$3,800	-	$1,500	-	39.47%	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$5,000,000**	**-**	**$1,958,000**	**-**	**39.16%**	**-**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 30% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionally.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	380	165	43.42%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$5,000,000	$1,958,000	39.16%
Enhance	-	-	-

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	380	165	43.42%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$5,000,000	$1,958,000	39.16%
Enhance	-	-	-

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Phase 15

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/19/2026

Project Title: Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Phase 15

Funds Recommended: $3,666,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: David Ruff
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Partners Contact

Minnesota Land Trust: Wayne Ostlie - wostlie@mnland.org - (651) 917-6292

The Nature Conservancy: David Ruff - david.ruff@tnc.org - (507) 646-9662

Trust for Public Land: DJ Forbes - DJ.Forbes@tpl.org - (651) 308-5531

Location Information

County Location(s): Winona, Olmsted, Wabasha, Fillmore, Houston and Goodhue.

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Southeast Forest

Activity types:

Protect in Easement

Protect in Fee

Restore

Enhance

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Wetlands

Prairie

Forest

Habitat

Narrative

Abstract

Phase 15 of the Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration program will protect approximately 313 acres using conservation easements and fee-title acquisition, as well as restore and enhance approximately 590 acres of declining habitat for important wildlife species. Work will occur in strategically targeted, resilient corridors of biodiversity significance within the Blufflands of Southeast Minnesota, resulting in increased public access and improved wildlife habitat.

Design and Scope of Work

The Southeast Blufflands is Minnesota's most biodiverse region. Some 86 different native plant communities have been mapped by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS) in the program area, covering nearly 150,000 acres. These communities provide habitat for 183 rare state-listed plants and animals and more Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) than anywhere else in the state. These imperiled species are concentrated within 749 Sites of Biodiversity Significance.

Despite this biological richness, only 5% of the region has been protected to date.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Minnesota Land Trust (MLT) and Trust for Public Land (TPL), in partnership, are working to change this. Through our Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Program, we are expanding and connecting contiguous blocks of protected lands, allowing land managers to restore, enhance and maintain high-quality habitats at a scale difficult to accomplish with fragmented ownership. Protecting and managing these lands is not only important for ecological reasons but it also allows public enjoyment of these lands and the resources they provide. This program is increasing access to public lands to meet the continued high demand for outdoor recreation within the region.

This Program has a long, proven track record of protecting, restoring and enhancing lands that meet both state and local priorities for biodiversity conservation, land access, and watershed health. To date, the Partnership has protected 16.8 square miles (10,753 acres) of priority lands and 52 stream and river miles, and has restored/enhanced 18.9 square miles (12,087 acres) of habitat. Great results, but our work is not finished.

This 15th Phase of our Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Program continues this body of work:

1. Conservation Easements: MLT will protect 183 acres of high-quality private land through conservation easements. Alongside existing high-priority projects, MLT will identify potential projects within targeted priority areas through an RFP process. This competitive landowner bid process incentivizes landowner donation of easement value, ranking projects based on ecological value and cost, prioritizing the best projects and securing them at the lowest cost to the state.

2. Fee Acquisition: TPL will coordinate with MN DNR on all potential fee title acquisitions. TPL will assist the participating DNR Divisions by conducting all or some of the following activities: initial site reviews, negotiations with the willing seller, appraisals, environmental reviews and acquisition of fee title. TPL will transfer lands to the DNR except when county or municipal ownership is appropriate. Fee acquisition of 130 acres of forest, prairie, and other habitat and 1 mile of coldwater trout stream is planned.

3. Restoration and Enhancement: TNC will use a stewardship crew and contractors to restore/enhance approximately 570 acres of bluff prairie, forest, and riparian habitat within priority protected lands. Ecological restoration enhancement management plans will be developed in coordination with the DNR staff, landowners and/or hired subcontractors. MLT will enhance 20 acres of high-quality habitat in bluff prairies and oak woodlands on private lands protected through conservation easements in prior phases of this program.

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

Working in the biodiversity hotspot of Minnesota, our goal is to expand and improve connected complexes of habitat that support the full diversity of plants, wildlife, and fish in Minnesota's Driftless Area. We target areas of biodiversity significance identified by the Minnesota Biological Survey (MBS), and protect and restore connected habitat to give SGCN species new opportunities to expand, migrate, and adapt to changing conditions. Protecting and expanding large areas preserves the full range of habitat types that supports the region's biodiversity. In addition to the numerous SGCN that benefit from our work, the mosaic of habitats we protect and manage support bedding areas for deer, roosting and foraging for turkeys, cold, clean water for trout, and key habitat needs for other popular small game species.

Sedimentation and erosion are major threats to fish in the region. Protecting and enhancing upland natural communities, especially on the steep bluffs that flank most trout streams, will help prevent additional erosion. Aquatic habitat also benefits from protection of trout stream banks and floodplains. The water-quality benefit that comes with the protection of forested upland areas is significant and contributes to improved trout and non-game fish and mussel habitat.

This program has benefited habitat for over 2,721 documented occurrences of some 112 SGCN identified by the Natural Heritage Inventory. This proposal will continue with high impact projects that protect, restore, and enhance habitat for Minnesota's rarest and most vulnerable species. Specific habitats include bluff prairie, oak savanna, oak-hickory woodland, and white pine - oak/maple forest. These habitats support rare species including: tri-colored and northern long-eared bats, timber rattlesnake, Blanding's turtle, western foxsnake, North American racer, American ginseng, tuberous Indian plantain, plains wild indigo and red-shouldered hawk.

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

Fragmentation, infrastructure development, and cropland conversion are constant threats to habitat. It is essential to seize the increasingly rare opportunities to protect large parcels when they become available, something our

partnership has a strong history of accomplishing.

In Southeast Minnesota, landowner interest and conservation demand exceed available funding. Although MLT typically releases an RFP to identify projects after funding is secured, there is a backlog of 8 high-priority conservation easement parcels included on this parcel list totaling 1,150 acres ahead of any RFP process.

Invasive species threaten many of the high-quality habitat complexes in the region. Active management is needed to maintain native plant communities. Likewise, the lack of fire and grazing on bluff prairies and oak savannas within larger disturbance dependent habitat threatens the long-term ecosystem viability. Delaying action in those habitats by even a couple years can make future management more difficult and costly.

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

A number of conservation plans covering Southeast MN have identified habitat corridors and complexes with high biodiversity significance and potential to expand areas of protected land. These include watershed-based Landscape Stewardship Plans and DNR's Wildlife Action Network along with the Conservation Focus Areas in the Root River and Whitewater watersheds.

Our work will focus on these areas, working towards a long-term vision of high-quality protected habitat complexes within larger connected corridors. Protection projects will prioritize parcels that are either 1) connected to existing protected lands, or 2) are of significant standalone size and have potential for future expansion. These two criteria directly address expanding habitat complexes and protecting large parcels from parcelization and fragmentation.

Restoration projects fill in gaps within these habitat corridors resulting from past land use, reducing fragmentation and increasing landscape connectivity. Enhancement work will focus on improving habitat within the core complexes. We strive to bring habitat within these cores to the highest quality, creating resilient hubs for species along natural corridors.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Southeast Forest

Protect forest habitat though acquisition in fee or easement to prevent parcelization and fragmentation and to provide the ability to access and manage landlocked public properties

Outcomes

Programs in southeast forest region:

Large corridors and complexes of biologically diverse wildlife habitat typical of the unglaciated region are restored and protected ~ *We will track the acres of priority parcels protected within the Conservation*

Opportunity Areas (COA) identified as priorities in regional planning. Success within each COA will be determined based on the percentage of area protected, restored and/or enhanced.

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

This proposal does not substitute or supplant previous funding that was not from a Legacy fund.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

Tracts acquired in fee title will be transferred to the state for ongoing management except when local ownership is appropriate. Acquisition projects will be near or adjacent to existing protected lands, including state-owned lands and lands under conservation easement, allowing for the expansion of management activities that are already taking place. Habitats cleared of invasive species will be maintained with prescribed fire and other practices depending on funding. Protection and restoration projects will improve future prescribed fire and maintenance activities through economies of scale. The tracts protected and enhanced as part of this proposal also meet the prioritization for Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan. MN DNR has been successful in securing federal habitat enhancement funding.

Land protected through conservation easements will be sustained by MLT through a state-of-the art easement stewardship standards and practices. MLT is a nationally-accredited and insured land trust with a successful easement stewardship program that includes annual property monitoring and defending the easements as necessary. In addition, MLT encourages landowners to undertake active ecological management of their properties, provides them with habitat management plans and works with them to secure resources (expertise and funding) to undertake these activities over time.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2027 and perpetually	MLT Easement Stewardship and Enforcement Fund	Annual monitoring in perpetuity	Enforcement as necessary	-
Every 4-6 years	Game and Fish Fund	prescribed fire	-	-
Every 4-6 years	US Fish and Wildlife Service	prescribed fire	-	-

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

This program focuses on protecting and restoring habitat critical to biodiversity in the most biologically diverse region of Minnesota. While that primary goal does not directly engage specific human communities, protecting, restoring, and enhancing diverse and resilient habitat benefits all Minnesotans. It keeps our air and water clean, mitigates the impacts of climate change, and conserves the biological diversity that is every Minnesotan’s natural heritage.

Our program also works to increase public access to opportunities for recreation. Outdoor recreation provides benefits to all people, from the physical, mental, and spiritual health rewards of being in nature to the social benefits of family and group recreation. In Southeast Minnesota, the rising price of land is quickly turning access to natural spaces into a luxury good. With less than 5 percent of the land protected, opening new opportunities for public access to the outdoors helps make sure economic status never becomes a barrier to enjoying the wealth of nature available in the Driftless Area. The opportunities public land provides are especially important to members of indigenous communities who were displaced from the land and other historically marginalized or disadvantaged

communities who have had fewer opportunities to access or acquire it. Indeed, public land in Southeast Minnesota is used heavily by members of BIPOC communities who lack places to hunt, fish, or hike closer to home.

The Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, and Minnesota Land Trust all hold a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice as a core value. Examples of that commitment include, but are not limited to, working with diverse communities to put a park, trail, or natural area within a 10-minute walk of every Minnesotan living within a city; programs to protect camps and nature centers that serve a diversity of Minnesota Youth; partnerships with indigenous communities to protect culturally important resources like wild rice; and to undertake shared learning around cultural practices like prescribed fire. We are committed to seeking more ways to close the outdoor access gap and support diverse human communities as we continue preserving the biological diversity of Minnesota.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Will county board or other local government approval be formally sought prior to acquisition, per 97A.056 subd 13(j)?**
No

Describe any measures to inform local governments of land acquisition under their jurisdiction:
We will follow the county/township board notification processes as directed by current statutory language.

Is the land you plan to acquire (fee title) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Who will manage the easement?
Minnesota Land Trust

Who will be the easement holder?
Minnesota Land Trust

What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
Minnesota Land Trust anticipates accomplishing approximately 2-4 easements with this appropriation.

Will restoration and enhancement work follow best management practices including MS 84.973 Pollinator Habitat Program?
Yes

Is the restoration and enhancement activity on permanently protected land per 97A.056, Subd 13(f), tribal lands, and/or public waters per MS 103G.005, Subd. 15 or on lands to be acquired in this program?
Yes

Where does the activity take place?

WMA

SNA

AMA

Permanently Protected Conservation Easements

County/Municipal

Public Waters

State Forests

Other : TNC Preserve acquired with Outdoor Heritage Funds

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
Yes

Explain what will be planted and include the maximum percentage of any acquired parcel that would be planted into foodplots by the proposer or the end owner of the property:
MLT - The purpose of the Minnesota Land Trust's conservation easements is to protect existing high quality natural habitat and to preserve opportunities for future restoration. As such, we restrict any agricultural lands and use on the properties. In cases in which there are agricultural lands associated with the larger property, we will either carve the agricultural area out of the conservation easement, or in some limited cases, we may include a small percentage of agricultural lands if it is not feasible to carve those areas out. In such cases, however, we will not use OHF funds to pay the landowners for that portion of the conservation easement.

TNC and TPL - We do not anticipate planting of any crops on land acquired in fee or restored in this program outside of the initial restoration of the land. Crops may be planted on pre-existing fields for a short period following acquisition until all such lands can be restored to native habitat, however that would be considered part of the initial restoration. In rare cases, crops may be used as an accepted method of preparing a site for prairie restoration. For example, short-term use of soybeans could be used for restorations in order to control weed seedbeds prior to prairie planting. In some cases, this necessitates the use of GMO treated products to facilitate herbicide use in order to control weeds present in the seedbank, however neonicotinoids will not be used.

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Is this land currently open for hunting and fishing?
No

Will the land be open for hunting and fishing after completion?
Yes

Describe any variation from the State of Minnesota regulations:
None

Who will eventually own the fee title land?

State of MN

NGO

County

Local Unit of Government

Land acquired in fee will be designated as a:

WMA

AMA

SNA

State Forest

Other : TNC Preserve; County- or City-owned natural area

What is the anticipated number of closed acquisitions (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
1 - 2.

Will the eased land be open for public use?
No

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?
No

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?
No

Some restoration and enhancement work on fee acquisitions may continue beyond this proposal's funding and availability. In these cases, additional restoration will be funded by a combination of future OHF proposals, other grants, or DNR funding.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?
No

Explain how and when the restoration/enhancement work will be completed and identify the source of funding:
Restoration expenses include program development activities in addition to restoration construction expenses. MLT restoration personnel will conduct outreach with easement landowners to evaluate, scope, design and schedule additional restoration projects. These activities will improve the project selection, cost-estimates and outcomes for future OHF funding requests. Some restoration and enhancement work on

fee acquisitions may continue beyond this proposal's funding and availability. In these cases, additional restoration will be funded by a combination of future OHF proposals, other grants, or DNR funding.

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Easement acquisition	June 30, 2031
Acquisition of fee land	June 30, 2031
Restoration/Enhancement on parcels protected without grant	June 30, 2032
Restoration/Enhancement on parcels protected with grant	June 30, 2035
Purchase agreements or options on acquisition of fee land	June 30, 2031

Date of Final Report Submission: 10/01/2032

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Grand Totals Across All Partnerships

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$571,100	-	-	$571,100
Contracts	$625,000	-	-	$625,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$1,306,000	-	-	$1,306,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$582,000	$58,000	-, Landowner Donation	$640,000
Easement Stewardship	$112,000	-	-	$112,000
Travel	$69,000	$3,000	-, Private	$72,000
Professional Services	$164,500	-	-	$164,500
Direct Support Services	$148,400	$106,500	-, Private, Private	$254,900
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$39,000	-	-	$39,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$1,500	-	-	$1,500
Supplies/Materials	$24,500	-	-	$24,500
DNR IDP	$23,000	-	-	$23,000
Grand Total	**$3,666,000**	**$167,500**	**-**	**$3,833,500**

Partner: Minnesota Land Trust

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$256,000	-	-	$256,000
Contracts	$130,000	-	-	$130,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$582,000	$58,000	Landowner Donation	$640,000
Easement Stewardship	$112,000	-	-	$112,000
Travel	$8,000	-	-	$8,000
Professional Services	$139,500	-	-	$139,500
Direct Support Services	$69,500	-	-	$69,500
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$1,500	-	-	$1,500
Supplies/Materials	$1,500	-	-	$1,500
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$1,300,000**	**$58,000**	**-**	**$1,358,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
MLT Restoration Program Staff	0.14	5.0	$76,000	-	-	$76,000
MLT Staff, including CEO; Directors of Land Protection, Development & Communications, Finance & Operations, and Stewardship; General Counsel; and various Sr. Managers, Managers, and others	0.45	4.0	$180,000	-	-	$180,000

Partner: The Nature Conservancy

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$210,100	-	-	$210,100
Contracts	$450,000	-	-	$450,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	$61,000	-	-	$61,000
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$55,900	$83,500	Private	$139,400
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	$23,000	-	-	$23,000
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$800,000**	**$83,500**	**-**	**$883,500**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
TNC Restoration/Enhancement Crew	1.75	1.0	$101,100	-	-	$101,100
TNC Project Management and Grants Admin	1.3	1.0	$109,000	-	-	$109,000

Partner: Trust for Public Land

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$105,000	-	-	$105,000
Contracts	$45,000	-	-	$45,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$1,306,000	-	-	$1,306,000
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	-	-	-	-
Easement Stewardship	-	-	-	-
Travel	-	$3,000	Private	$3,000
Professional Services	$25,000	-	-	$25,000
Direct Support Services	$23,000	$23,000	Private	$46,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$39,000	-	-	$39,000
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	-	-	-	-
Supplies/Materials	-	-	-	-
DNR IDP	$23,000	-	-	$23,000
Grand Total	**$1,566,000**	**$26,000**	**-**	**$1,592,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Project and Legal Staff	0.14	4.0	$105,000	-	-	$105,000

Amount of Request: $3,666,000
Amount of Leverage: $167,500
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 4.57%
DSS + Personnel: $719,500
As a % of the total request: 19.63%
Easement Stewardship: $112,000
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 19.24%

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
Our program received 22% of our requested amount. To accommodate this reduction, all program activities will be significantly reduced, resulting in fewer anticipated outputs of both protection and restoration acres. Personnel and Direct Support Services have also been reduced to account for the reduced workload.

Detail leverage sources and confirmation of funds:
TPL and TNC will leverage privately sourced funds to cover direct support services (DSS) costs not reimbursed. TPL has leveraged private funds for travel.
MLT encourages landowners to donate value as a participant in the program. This leverage ($58,000) is a conservative estimate of expected landowner contribution.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A reduction in funding would reduce outputs (acres/activities) slightly more than proportionately. Some costs related to program development and oversight remain constant regardless of appropriation amount. The costs of many professional services related to land protection also do not scale proportionately, forcing a larger reduction in acres/activities.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Program management costs (personnel and DSS expenses) will be reduced as well. However, not exactly proportionately as program development and oversight costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
TNC and TPL contracts support enhancement and restoration work. Contractors include private vendors and Conservation Corps of MN/IA.

MLT will use contract funds for three purposes: to complete habitat management plans on new easement acquisitions; for restoration projects; and landowner outreach (printing/mail services for direct mailings, newspaper ads).

Professional Services

What is included in the Professional Services line?

Appraisals

Other : Environmental assessments

Surveys

Title Insurance and Legal Fees

Fee Acquisition

What is the anticipated number of fee title acquisition transactions?
1 - 2.

Easement Stewardship

What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?

Minnesota Land Trust anticipates accomplishing approximately 2-4 easements with this appropriation. The average cost per easement to perpetually fund the Minnesota Land Trust's long-term monitoring and enforcement obligations is $28,000; in extreme circumstances, a larger amount may be sought. This figure has been determined by using a stewardship funding "cost analysis" which is the industry standard according to the Land Trust Accreditation process. Periodic updates to this cost analysis are provided to LSOHC staff.

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
Yes

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging
Leases for a TNC staff vehicle and a skid steer used by the management crew for restoration and enhancement work on LSOHC projects are included. It also includes a long-term apartment lease for seasonal management crew staff. These expenses make up 68% of TNC's travel expenses, and 60% of the partnership's travel budget. Vehicle rental is also included for TPL and MLT's travel.

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?
TNC: DSS is based on The Nature Conservancy's Federal Negotiated Rate (FNR) as proposed and approved by the US Dept. of Interior on an annual basis. In this proposal we are requesting reimbursement of 7.5% of eligible base costs as determined by our annual FNR and based on suggestions from the Council in prior years' hearings. The amount requested for reimbursement represents 40% of the total reimbursable costs allowed under the FNR. Examples of expenses included in the FNR include services from in-house legal counsel; finance, human resources; and information technology support, all of which contribute directly to the implementation of the project. The FNR is not applied to capital equipment over $50,000 or land acquisition.

MLT: In a process that was approved by the DNR on March 17, 2017, Minnesota Land Trust determined our direct support services rate to include all of the allowable direct and necessary expenditures that are not captured in other line items in the budget, which is similar to the Land Trust's proposed federal indirect rate. We will apply this DNR approved rate only to personnel expenses to determine the total amount of the direct support services.

TPL: The Trust for Public Land's DSS request is based upon our federally approved rate, which has been approved by the DNR. 50% of these costs are requested from the grant and 50% is contributed as leverage.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?
Equipment and tools to be purchased will be those necessary for protection, restoration and management activities. Examples include Personal Protective Equipment, other field safety equipment, GPS units, backpack sprayers for herbicide application, bladder bags, and assorted hand tools for prescribed fire.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?
No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	20	20	-	40
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	130	130
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	183	183
Enhance	-	200	330	20	550
Total	**-**	**220**	**350**	**333**	**903**

How many of these Prairie acres are Native Prairie? (Table 1b)

Type	Native Prairie (acres)
Restore	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-
Protect in Easement	-
Enhance	20
Total	**20**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	$30,000	$30,000	-	$60,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$1,566,000	$1,566,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	$1,100,000	$1,100,000
Enhance	-	$300,000	$440,000	$200,000	$940,000
Total	**-**	**$330,000**	**$470,000**	**$2,866,000**	**$3,666,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	40	-	-	40
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	130	-	-	130
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	183	-	-	183
Enhance	-	-	550	-	-	550
Total	**-**	**-**	**903**	**-**	**-**	**903**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	$60,000	-	-	$60,000
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	$1,566,000	-	-	$1,566,000
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	$1,100,000	-	-	$1,100,000
Enhance	-	-	$940,000	-	-	$940,000
Total	**-**	**-**	**$3,666,000**	**-**	**-**	**$3,666,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	$1,500	$1,500	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	$12,046
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	-	$6,010
Enhance	-	$1,500	$1,333	$10,000

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	$1,500	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	$12,046	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	-	$6,010	-	-
Enhance	-	-	$1,709	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

2

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?

Yes - Sign up criteria is attached

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:

For Protection in Fee Simple, parcels are prioritized based on:

- Location within a Conservation Opportunity Area or Area of Significant Native Biodiversity (allows for large landscape management and management efficiencies, i.e. large scale Rx fire)
- Presence of Minnesota Biological Survey mapped native plant communities
- Parcels equal to or greater than 80 acres in size are strongly preferred
- Proximity to a state-owned parcel
- A Conservation Partner willing to accept the property/meets partner objectives (SNA, WMA, Forestry)
- Must have a willing seller

Additionally, the Land Trust uses the attached criteria to prioritize conservation easement parcels currently on and not currently on the parcel list. All protection parcels will be added to the parcel list before incurring any expenses in accordance with LSOHC guidance.

Restore / Enhance Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Description
Lone Pine Bluff	Fillmore	10208203	25	$37,500	Yes	Lone Pine Invasive Species Herbicide and Interseeding
Schueler Bluffs	Fillmore	10408203	100	$75,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Structural Treatment with seeding/planting
Schueler Pasture	Fillmore	10408203	50	$75,000	Yes	Prairie Restoration
Brownsville Bluff (Hey) phase 2	Houston	10304226	20	$100,000	Yes	Oak woodland enhancement at the top of bluff prairie
Dougherty Tract	Houston	10307231	75	$75,000	Yes	Dougherty Tract Invasives + Seeding/Enhancement
Kronseder Burn Unit	Houston	10105213	500	$8,000	Yes	Burn Unit Prep
Vinegar Ridge Bluffs	Houston	10407227	200	$175,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Seeding/Planting with structural treatment
Wet Bark Ag Fields	Houston	10307211	100	$350,000	Yes	Direct Hardwood Seeding
Wet Bark Bluffs 1	Houston	10307214	100	$20,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Seeding/Planting
Wet Bark Bluffs 2	Houston	10307212	50	$100,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Seeding/Planting
HCVF - North Fork	Olmsted	10711202	100	$25,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Structural Treatment
ST Whitewater North Branch - Olmsted	Olmsted	10711202	100	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Hoosier Ridge	Wabasha	10910235	200	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie

ST Whitewater North Branch - Wabasha	Wabasha	10811234	100	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
West Indian Creek	Wabasha	10911221	200	$40,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal (Hunt and Peck)
Zumbro Bottoms Burn Units	Wabasha	11011222	700	$10,000	Yes	Burn Unit Prep
Bronk North Burn Units	Winona	10708214	700	$80,000	Yes	Burn Unit Prep, invasive species control + TSI
Burnt Oaks Savanna	Winona	10810214	150	$25,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Seeding/Planting
HCVF - Cuthrell Valley	Winona	10810223	150	$150,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Structural Treatment
HCVF - Historic Valley	Winona	10810223	50	$10,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Seeding/Planting
HCVF - Lupine Valley Savanna	Winona	10810201	150	$50,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Seeding/Planting
HCVF - South Fork	Winona	10710236	50	$15,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal to buffer Algific Talus Slope
Hwy 26 Bluff	Winona	10710211	50	$10,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Seeding/Planting
LaMoille West Burn Units	Winona	10606212	500	$8,000	Yes	Burn Unit Prep and bluff prairie enhancement
Marnach Valley Bluff	Winona	10810228	25	$15,000	Yes	Structural Treatment and Seeding/Planting
ST Whitewater Beaver Creek	Winona	10810216	200	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Callahans	Winona	10707219	100	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Demonstration Farm	Winona	10710223	100	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Fire Tower	Winona	10710210	200	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Glendale Hollow	Winona	10810203	100	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Governor Ridge	Winona	10810216	200	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Hubeleins	Winona	10710235	100	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Kramer Ravine	Winona	10710202	200	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie

ST Whitewater Leisen Ridge	Winona	10710212	200	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater North Branch - Winona	Winona	10710206	100	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Siebenaler	Winona	10810214	100	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Trout Valley	Winona	10810212	100	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
ST Whitewater Turkey Valley	Winona	10810226	200	$10,000	Yes	Management unit in Whitewater WMA with mix of floodplain and upland forest and prairie
Turkey Valley Savanna	Winona	10810226	100	$25,000	Yes	Invasive Species Removal and Seeding/Planting
WW Ag Fields	Winona	10810226	50	$75,000	Yes	Prairie Restoration

Fee Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
William Pease WMA Addition	Fillmore	10411207	100	$1,000,000	No
Dorer State Forest Addition - Minneiska	Winona	10809202	142	$900,000	No
Dorer State Forest Addition - Weber Springs	Winona	10505228	80	$500,000	No
Whitewater WMA Main III	Winona	10809205	40	$200,000	No

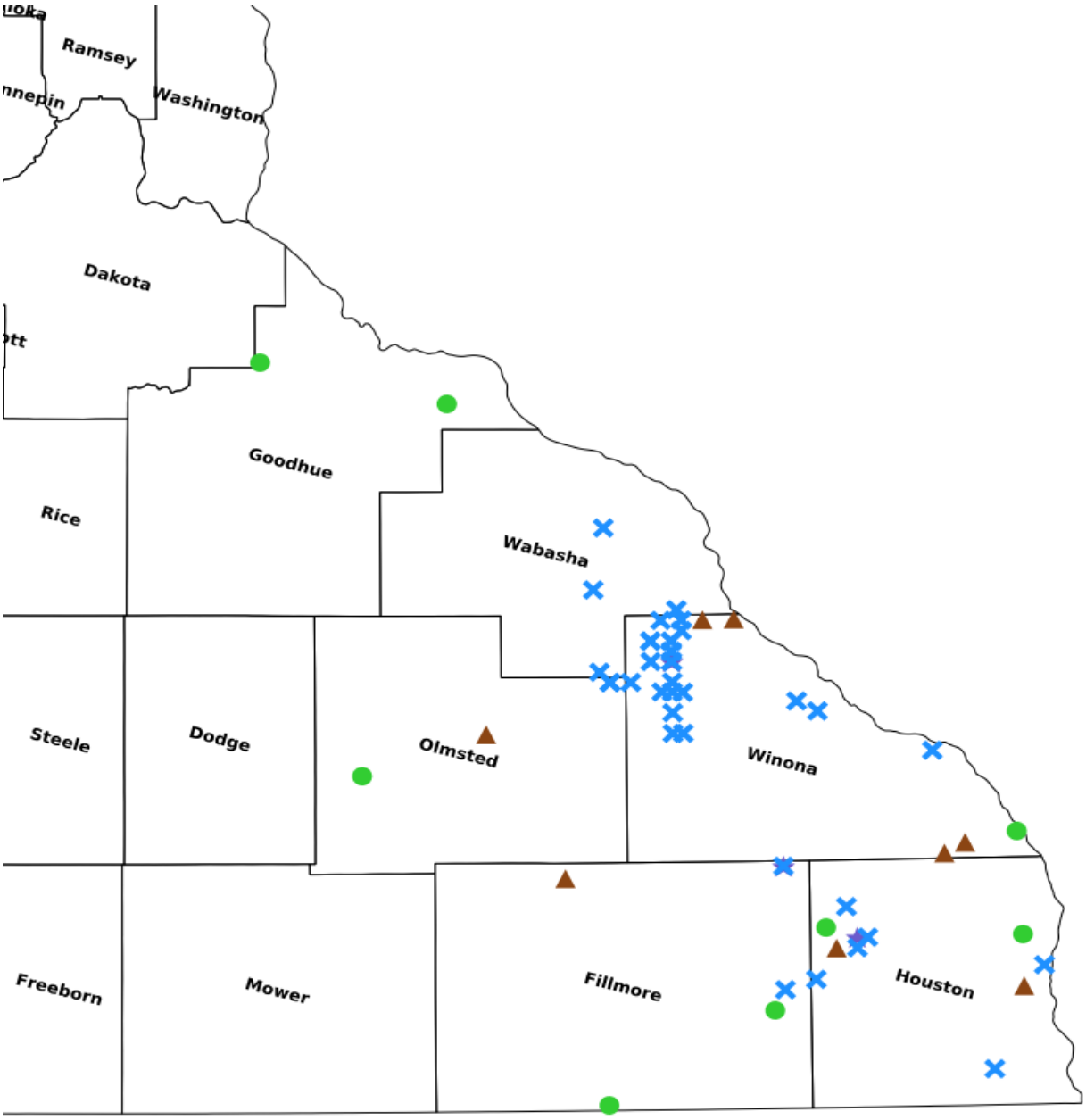
Fee Parcels with Buildings

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection	Buildings	Value of Buildings
Dorer State Forest Addition - Pine Creek	Houston	10505231	66	$450,000	No	1	$0
Dorer State Forest Addition - Reno Unit II	Houston	10204204	217	$1,900,000	No	2	$47,700
Yucatan WMA Addition	Houston	10307216	217	$2,100,000	No	3	-
Haverhill WMA Addition	Olmsted	10713235	80	$1,000,000	No	1	$32,300

Easement Parcels

Name	County	TRDS	Acres	Est Cost	Existing Protection
South Fork Root River - MLT	Fillmore	10208216	60	$288,000	No
Upper Iowa River - MLT	Fillmore	10111235	165	$775,000	No
Cannon River - MLT	Goodhue	11316231	80	$445,000	No
Wells Creek - MLT	Goodhue	11213219	60	$120,000	No
Butterfield Creek - MLT	Houston	10304209	130	$390,000	No
Daley Creek - MLT	Houston	10307205	300	$750,000	No
Zumbro River - MLT	Olmsted	10615223	188	$760,000	No
Mississippi River - MLT	Winona	10504220	167	$700,000	No

Parcel Map


Ramsey
Washington
Dakota
Goodhue
Rice
Wabasha
Steele
Dodge
Olmsted
Winona
Freeborn
Mower
Fillmore
Houston
0
5
10
15 mi
Protect in Easement
Protect in Fee with PILT
Protect in Fee W/O PILT
Restore
Enhance
Other

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Phase 15

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - Southeast Minnesota Protection and Restoration Phase 15
Organization: The Nature Conservancy
Manager: David Ruff

Budget

Requested Amount: $16,585,600
Appropriated Amount: $3,666,000
Percentage: 22.1%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$1,736,100	-	$571,100	-	32.9%	-
Contracts	$2,112,000	-	$625,000	-	29.59%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	$6,500,000	-	$1,306,000	-	20.09%	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$4,200,000	$420,000	$582,000	$58,000	13.86%	13.81%
Easement Stewardship	$392,000	-	$112,000	-	28.57%	-
Travel	$70,000	$3,000	$69,000	$3,000	98.57%	100.0%
Professional Services	$563,000	-	$164,500	-	29.22%	-
Direct Support Services	$470,500	$368,400	$148,400	$106,500	31.54%	28.91%
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	$195,000	-	$39,000	-	20.0%	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$6,000	-	$1,500	-	25.0%	-
Supplies/Materials	$179,000	-	$24,500	-	13.69%	-
DNR IDP	$162,000	-	$23,000	-	14.2%	-
Grand Total	**$16,585,600**	**$791,400**	**$3,666,000**	**$167,500**	**22.1%**	**21.17%**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A reduction in funding would reduce outputs (acres/activities) slightly more than proportionately. Some costs related to program development and oversight remain constant regardless of appropriation amount. The costs of many professional services related to land protection also do not scale proportionately, forcing a larger reduction in acres/activities.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Program management costs (personnel and DSS expenses) will be reduced as well. However, not exactly proportionately as program development and oversight costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A reduction in funding would reduce outputs (acres/activities) more than proportionately. Some costs related to program development and oversight remain constant regardless of appropriation amount. The costs of many professional services related to land protection also do not scale proportionately, forcing a larger reduction in acres/activities.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
Program management costs (personnel and DSS expenses) will be reduced as well. However, not exactly proportionately as program development and oversight costs remain consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	200	40	20.0%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	650	130	20.0%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	1,320	183	13.86%
Enhance	2,550	550	21.57%

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	$200,000	$60,000	30.0%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$7,815,000	$1,566,000	20.04%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$5,752,800	$1,100,000	19.12%
Enhance	$2,817,800	$940,000	33.36%

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	200	40	20.0%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	650	130	20.0%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	1,320	183	13.86%
Enhance	2,550	550	21.57%

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	$200,000	$60,000	30.0%
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	$7,815,000	$1,566,000	20.04%
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$5,752,800	$1,100,000	19.12%
Enhance	$2,817,800	$940,000	33.36%

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Wild Rice Shoreland Protection Phase X

Laws of Minnesota 2027 Accomplishment Plan

General Information

Date: 10/12/2026

Project Title: Wild Rice Shoreland Protection Phase X

Funds Recommended: $1,770,000

Legislative Citation:

Appropriation Language:

Manager Information

Manager's Name: Kevin Roth
Title: Easement Programs Coordinator
Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources
Address: 110 Second Street South Suite 307
City: Waite Park, MN 56387
Email: kevin.roth@state.mn.us
Office Number:
Mobile Number: 651-539-2521
Fax Number:
Website: BWSR.state.mn.us

Location Information

County Location(s):

Eco regions in which work will take place:

Northern Forest

Forest / Prairie Transition

Activity types:

Protect in Easement

Priority resources addressed by activity:

Wetlands

Forest

Narrative

Abstract

Phase 10 of the Wild Rice Shoreland Protection Program will utilize permanent conservation easements to protect 420 acres and 6,000 feet of wild rice shoreland habitat. Development trends pose a serious threat to wild rice habitat. Sites are selected through a ranking process that considers development risk, surrounding habitat, and existing wild rice lake quality. BWSR will utilize the RIM easement process in partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) within the Northern Forest and Forest Prairie Transition to accomplish protection. Previous phases of this project have protected 7,124 acres of wild rice shoreland protection.

Design and Scope of Work

Historically, wild rice occurred throughout Minnesota and extended into northern Iowa. Wild rice has since been extirpated from most of its southern range due to human impacts including changes to water quality and chemistry, sedimentation, drainage, flow alteration, boat traffic and competition from introduced aquatic invasive species. Today, the heart of the state's wild rice acreage falls within this project work area comprised of 15 counties -- Aitkin, Becker, Beltrami, Carlton, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Morrison, Otter Tail, St. Louis, Stearns, Todd, and Wadena.

Development trends have reduced the availability of developable shoreline on recreational lakes, resulting in shallow lakes, rivers, and shallow bays containing wild rice being increasingly targeted for shoreline development; posing a serious threat to remaining wild rice habitat. Many wild rice shoreland complexes are still intact with good water quality, but are subject to development pressure that, if allowed, will degrade the resource. This proposal will continue to fill a need for shoreland protection on key water bodies supporting wild rice in the Northern Forest and Forest Prairie Transition Sections.

Most wild rice waterbodies are public waters and offer some form of public access. Protecting wild rice by protecting parcels from shoreland development leads to assurance that recreation opportunities on public wild rice waterbodies are maintained.

The Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) and fifteen local SWCDs will continue to offer permanent watershed protection on shallow lakes, rivers and shallow bays that produce wild rice. BWSR's Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Program will acquire approximately 420 acres of shoreline habitat through permanent conservation easements. Parcels will be selected based on the degree to which they help permanently protect the land around a given wild rice water body and protect existing habitat.

SWCD generated landowner applications will be reviewed and parcels ranked by the local technical committee using the "Wild Rice Shoreland Protection scoresheet" (attached).

Explain how the plan addresses habitat protection, restoration, and/or enhancement for fish, game & wildlife, including threatened or endangered species conservation

Wild rice shoreland encompasses a complex of shallow lakes, rivers, and shallow bays of deeper lakes that support rice and provide some of the most important habitat for wetland-dependent wildlife species in Minnesota. Wild rice habitat is especially important to Minnesota's migrating and breeding waterfowl. More than 17 species of wildlife listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) use wild rice areas as habitat for breeding, migration, and/or foraging.

Targeted SGCN are as follows: Common Loon, Trumpeter Swan, Bald Eagle, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Red-necked Grebe, Sora Rail, Virginia Rail, Yellow Rail, Black Tern, Rusty Blackbird, Sedge Wren, Lesser Scaup, Northern Pintail, and American Black Duck.

Wild rice is some of the most important habitat for wetland-dependent wildlife species in Minnesota as noted in the MNDNR's Natural Wild Rice in Minnesota report to the legislature (2008). Important game species supported by wild rice include the Ring-necked Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Scaup, and Bufflehead.

What are the elements of this plan that are critical from a timing perspective?

Lake lot development has reduced the availability of developable shorelines on recreational lakes, resulting in shallow lakes, rivers, and shallow bays containing wild rice being increasingly targeted for shoreline development. Many of these wild rice shoreland complexes currently remain intact with good water quality, but are subject to development pressure that, if allowed, will degrade the resource.

Easement acquisition is critical at this time to head off development and habitat fragmentation along these sensitive lakes. Beyond public ownership, current shoreline protection on wild rice shoreland is limited to county shoreland ordinances, and limited conservation efforts by non-governmental organizations. Shoreland ordinances do not prevent wild rice habitat fragmentation and degradation. Further, even the most stringent ordinances still allow for some subdivision and development, which is detrimental to wild rice shoreland complexes.

Describe how the plan expands habitat corridors or complexes and/or addresses habitat fragmentation:

To target sites, aerial photos of wild rice waterbodies are reviewed during a preliminary screening to find those that are the most intact, provide the most wild rice, have the most waterfowl use, and can be protected for the lowest cost. Waters are sorted into Low, Medium and High categories. Once the waters have been ranked, the SWCD contacts landowners on the high and some of the medium priority waters. Prioritization is done in collaboration with DNR shallow lakes staff.

Easement selection occurs with a goal of maximum wild rice habitat complex protection along shorelands. Easement parcels are further targeted and prioritized by adjacency to current protected lands/public lands and a low level of lake development. The following additional factors are considered to ensure site selection reflects current science-based measures for wild rice habitat protection: DNR wild rice water designation, feet of shoreline protected, development potential of site, acquisition urgency, depth from shore, watershed considerations, easement size relative to the parcel, and an analysis of stakeholder support. Sites that contain a wild rice lake outlet are also prioritized for potential DNR management of water levels to ensure protection.

Which top 2 Conservation Plans referenced in MS97A.056, subd. 3a are most applicable to this project?

Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025

Outdoor Heritage Fund: A 25 Year Framework

Which LSOHC section priorities are addressed in this program?

Forest / Prairie Transition

Protect, enhance, and restore wild rice wetlands, shallow lakes, wetland/grassland complexes, aspen parklands, and shoreland that provide critical habitat for game and nongame wildlife

Northern Forest

Protect shoreland and restore or enhance critical habitat on wild rice lakes, shallow lakes, cold water lakes, streams and rivers, and spawning areas

Outcomes

Programs in forest-prairie transition region:

Protected, restored, and enhanced nesting and migratory habitat for waterfowl, upland birds, and species of greatest conservation need ~ *Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species. A summary of the total number of wetland acres and associated forest land secured under easement through this appropriation will be reported. We expect sustained populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these easements are secured. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes.*

Programs in the northern forest region:

Forestlands are protected from development and fragmentation ~ *Healthy populations of endangered, threatened, and special concern species as well as more common species. A summary of the total number of wetland acres and associated forest land secured under easement through this appropriation will be reported. We expect sustained populations of endangered, threatened, special concern and game species as these easements are secured. On-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years to ensure maintained outcomes.*

Per MS 97A.056, Subd. 24, Please explain whether the request is supplanting or is a substitution for any previous funding that was not from a legacy fund and was used for the same purpose.

This funding request is not supplanting existing funding or a substitution for any previous funding.

How will you sustain and/or maintain this work after the Outdoor Heritage Funds are expended?

BWSR is responsible for monitoring and enforcement of RIM easements. BWSR partners with local SWCDs to carry out oversight, monitoring and inspection of conservation easements. Easements are inspected every year for the first five years beginning the year after the easement is recorded. Thereafter, on-site inspections are performed every three years and compliance checks are performed in the other two years. SWCDs document findings and report to BWSR on each site inspection conducted. A non-compliance procedure is implemented when potential violations are identified.
Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are $10,000 per easement. This value is based on using SWCD staff for monitoring and preliminary enforcement. The amount includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time as well as costs for encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations and legal enforcement.

Monitoring by local staff also provides a local connection with the landowner to provide current and future strategies for maintenance and management of easement lands.

Actions to Maintain Project Outcomes

Year	Source of Funds	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
2027-Ongoing	Stewardship Account	Inspections every year for the first five years; then every third year.	Corrective actions of any violations	Enforcement action by MN Attorney General Office
2027-Ongoing	Landowner Responsibility	Maintain compliance with easement terms	-	-

Provide an assessment of how your program celebrates cultural diversity or reaches diverse communities in Minnesota, including reaching low- and moderate-income households:

Wild rice is a culturally important resource for Native Americans in Minnesota. This proposal specifically works to protect wild rice resources. BWSR will continue to engage tribes in the easement selection and future funding proposals process. BWSR hopes to add wild rice lake restoration to this proposal in the future. Initial discussions with the Fon du Lac tribe on this have already begun.

Activity Details

Requirements

If funded, this program will meet all applicable criteria set forth in MS 97A.056?
Yes

Is the land you plan to acquire (easement) free of any other permanent protection?
Yes

Who will manage the easement?
SWCD, Landowner, BWSR

Who will be the easement holder?
BWSR

What is the anticipated number of easements (range is fine) you plan to accomplish with this appropriation?
6

Land Use

Will there be planting of any crop on OHF land purchased or restored in this program, either by the proposer or the end owner of the property, outside of the initial restoration of the land?
No

Will insecticides or fungicides (including neonicotinoid and fungicide treated seed) be used within any activities of this program either in the process of restoration or use as food plots?
No

Will the eased land be open for public use?
Yes

Describe the expected public use:
This easement program specifically allows for more recreation opportunities on wild rice water bodies with public access.

RIM easements do not require that private land is open to the public; however, this question is also evaluated on public benefit and RIM easements do provide a significant public benefit; often expand wildlife habitat near public lands. Many of these easements will be taken where there already is a large percentage of public land. Strategically placed easements improve habitat for wildlife that use wild rice water bodies in addition to improving terrestrial habitats located adjacent to these water bodies.

RIM easement land remains in private ownership and the landowner still pays property taxes. Statutory goals of the Outdoor Heritage Fund for protection and restoration of habitat. Minnesota Statute 97A.056 states ". . .the fund must be expended to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife." and "The council shall make recommendations . . . that directly relate to the restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife, and that prevent forest fragmentation, encourage forest consolidation, and expand restored native prairie."

Criteria in all RIM program scoresheets used to evaluate and prioritize parcels funded include proximity of the easement land to lands that are in public ownership and/or open to public hunting. Parcels adjacent to public land or that would connect or expand larger existing habitat areas receive additional points in the scoring and ranking process. Wildlife typically travel far enough distances where a mixture of habitat on public and private land is necessary in order to maximize wildlife carrying capacity in that area. Private lands provide refuge in heavily pressured hunting areas as well.

Will new trails or roads be developed or improved, beyond those used for maintenance and management, as a result of the proposed acquisition?

Yes

Describe the types of trails or roads and the allowable uses:

Though uncommon, new trails may be developed if they contribute to easement maintenance or benefit the easement site (fire breaks, berm maintenance, forest stewardship) and are noted on the conservation plan. Narrow mowed trails for personal use are allowed for landowner access on RIM easements. Unauthorized trails are a violation of the easement.

How will maintenance and monitoring be accomplished?

Under the terms of the easement, a conservation plan is developed with the landowner and maintained as part of each easement. Landowners are required to maintain compliance with the easement and the conservation plan. BWSR, in cooperation with SWCDs, implements a stewardship process to track, monitor quality and assure compliance with easement terms and the conservation plan.

Will the acquired parcels be restored or enhanced within this appropriation?

Yes

The potential for habitat enhancements will be considered for each easement. No funding from LSOHC will be used for these projects, other funding methods will be considered when opportunities arise.

Will the land that you acquire (fee or easement) be restored or enhanced within this program's funding and availability?

Yes

Timeline

Activity Name	Estimated Completion Date
Final Report Submitted	November 1, 2035
RIM easements secured	June 30, 2031

Date of Final Report Submission: 09/30/2031

Availability of Appropriation: Subd. 7. Availability of Appropriation
(a) Money appropriated in this section may not be spent on activities unless they are directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation and are specified in the accomplishment plan approved by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Money appropriated in this section must not be spent on indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges that are not directly related to and necessary for a specific appropriation. Money appropriated for fee title acquisition of land may be used to restore, enhance, and provide for public use of the land acquired with the appropriation. Public-use facilities must have a minimal impact on habitat in acquired lands.
(b) Money appropriated in this section is available as follows:
(1) money appropriated for acquiring real property is available until June 30, 2031;
(2) money appropriated for restoring and enhancing land acquired with an appropriation in this section is available for four years after the acquisition date with a maximum end date of June 30, 2035;
(3) money appropriated for restoring or enhancing other land is available until June 30, 2032;
(4) notwithstanding clauses (1) to (3), money appropriated for a project that receives at least 15 percent of its funding from federal funds is available until a date sufficient to match the availability of federal funding to a maximum of six years if the federal funding was confirmed and included in the original approved draft accomplishment plan; and
(5) money appropriated for other projects is available until the end of the fiscal year in which it is appropriated.

Budget

Budget reallocations up to 10% do not require an amendment to the Accomplishment Plan.

Totals

Item	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Personnel	$115,600	-	-	$115,600
Contracts	$15,000	-	-	$15,000
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$1,539,900	-	-	$1,539,900
Easement Stewardship	$60,000	-	-	$60,000
Travel	$3,100	-	-	$3,100
Professional Services	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$30,700	-	-	$30,700
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$4,400	-	-	$4,400
Supplies/Materials	$1,300	-	-	$1,300
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$1,770,000**	**-**	**-**	**$1,770,000**

Personnel

Position	Annual FTE	Years Working	Funding Request	Leverage	Leverage Source	Total
Easements	0.21	4.0	$115,600	-	-	$115,600

Amount of Request: $1,770,000
Amount of Leverage: -
Leverage as a percent of the Request: 0.0%
DSS + Personnel: $146,300
As a % of the total request: 8.27%
Easement Stewardship: $60,000
As a % of the Easement Acquisition: 3.9%

How will this program accommodate the reduced appropriation recommendation from the original proposed requested amount?
Proportional reductions across the entire budget as well as acres protected have been made.

Does this project have the ability to be scalable?
Yes

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionately.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Personnel

Has funding for these positions been requested in the past?
Yes

Contracts

What is included in the contracts line?
The contracts line is used for payments to SWCD staff for easement acquisition and technical assistance, as appropriate. Estimated restoration costs are included in the easement acquisition line.

Easement Stewardship

What is the number of easements anticipated, cost per easement for stewardship, and explain how that amount is calculated?
6 easements at $10,000 per easement. The total stewardship amount will ultimately be dependent on the cost of easements and if the proposed easement number is reached. Perpetual monitoring and enforcement costs are $10,000 per easement. This value is based on using SWCD staff for monitoring and preliminary enforcement. The amount includes costs of BWSR and local government unit staff time as well as costs for encouraging voluntary compliance, addressing potential violations and legal enforcement.

Travel

Does the amount in the travel line include equipment/vehicle rental?
No

Explain the amount in the travel line outside of traditional travel costs of mileage, food, and lodging
The travel line will only be used for traditional travel costs.

I understand and agree that lodging, meals, and mileage must comply with the current MMB Commissioner Plan:
Yes

Direct Support Services

How did you determine which portions of the Direct Support Services of your shared support services is direct to this program?
BWSR annually reviews and updates direct support services costs that are directly related to and necessary for each request based on the type of work being done and the program staff time involved.

Other Equipment/Tools

Give examples of the types of Equipment and Tools that will be purchased?
Steel posts and signs to mark easement boundaries.

Federal Funds

Do you anticipate federal funds as a match for this program?
No

Output Tables

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	30	-	390	-	420
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**30**	**-**	**390**	**-**	**420**

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$50,000	-	$1,720,000	-	$1,770,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**$50,000**	**-**	**$1,720,000**	**-**	**$1,770,000**

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Acres
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	50	-	-	370	420
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**50**	**-**	**-**	**370**	**420**

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest	Total Funding
Restore	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	$250,000	-	-	$1,520,000	$1,770,000
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**-**	**$250,000**	**-**	**-**	**$1,520,000**	**$1,770,000**

Average Cost per Acre by Resource Type (Table 5)

Type	Wetland	Prairie	Forest	Habitat
Restore	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$1,666	-	$4,410	-
Enhance	-	-	-	-

Average Cost per Acre by Ecological Section (Table 6)

Type	Metro/Urban	Forest/Prairie	SE Forest	Prairie	N. Forest
Restore	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	-	$5,000	-	-	$4,108
Enhance	-	-	-	-	-

Target Lake/Stream/River Feet or Miles

6,000 ft

Parcels

Parcel Information

Sign-up Criteria?
Yes - Sign up criteria is attached

Explain the process used to identify, prioritize, and select the parcels on your list:
Wild Rice waters are identified for priority protection by DNR shallow lakes staff in conjunction with BWSR and SWCD staff. Each waterbody is given a high, medium or low priority based on several factors including the water's ability to produce the most wild rice, attract the greatest numbers of waterfowl and has currently intact shoreline .

SWCDs complete outreach to landowners on high and medium priority waters.

Further prioritization is made utilizing the scoring and ranking sheet and a technical review committee. Scoring and ranking places an emphasis on adjacent public lands, other permanently protected lands and critical habitat features are priorities. It also considers the amount of shoreland protected and percentage of the lake that has protection. Once a lake has adequate protection, we move that lake to a low priority and move to protection of additional lakes.

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Wild Rice Shoreland Protection Phase X

Comparison Report

Program Title: ML 2027 - Wild Rice Shoreland Protection Phase X
Organization: Board of Water and Soil Resources
Manager: Kevin Roth

Budget

Requested Amount: $3,500,000
Appropriated Amount: $1,770,000
Percentage: 50.57%

Item	Requested Proposal	Leverage Proposal	Appropriated AP	Leverage AP	Percent of Request	Percent of Leverage
Personnel	$228,500	-	$115,600	-	50.59%	-
Contracts	$30,000	-	$15,000	-	50.0%	-
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT	-	-	-	-	-	-
Easement Acquisition	$3,043,200	-	$1,539,900	-	50.6%	-
Easement Stewardship	$120,000	-	$60,000	-	50.0%	-
Travel	$6,100	-	$3,100	-	50.82%	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct Support Services	$60,800	-	$30,700	-	50.49%	-
DNR Land Acquisition Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Equipment/Tools	$8,800	-	$4,400	-	50.0%	-
Supplies/Materials	$2,600	-	$1,300	-	50.0%	-
DNR IDP	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	**$3,500,000**	**-**	**$1,770,000**	**-**	**50.57%**	**-**

If the project received 70% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 50% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionately.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

If the project received 50% of the requested funding

Describe how the scaling would affect acres/activities and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A 30% reduction in funding would reduce outputs proportionately.

Describe how personnel and DSS expenses would be adjusted and if not proportionately reduced, why?
A small portion of easement staff time specifically for appropriation and program management and reporting remains relatively consistent regardless of appropriation amount.

Output

Acres by Resource Type (Table 1)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	840	420	50.0%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding by Resource Type (Table 2)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$3,500,000	$1,770,000	50.57%
Enhance	-	-	-

Acres within each Ecological Section (Table 3)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	0	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	0	-	-
Protect in Easement	840	420	50.0%
Enhance	0	-	-

Total Requested Funding within each Ecological Section (Table 4)

Type	Total Proposed	Total in AP	Percentage of Proposed
Restore	-	-	-
Protect in Fee with State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Fee w/o State PILT Liability	-	-	-
Protect in Easement	$3,500,000	$1,770,000	50.57%
Enhance	-	-	-